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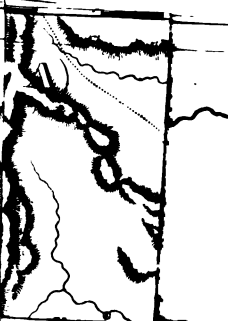


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THE

NESTORIANS;

OR,

THE LOST TRIBES.

CONTAINING

EVIDENCE OF THEIR IDENTITY,

AN

ACCOUNT OF THEIR MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CEREMONIES,

TOGETHER WITH SKETCHES OF TRAVEL IN ANCIENT

ASSYRIA, ARMENIA, MEDIA, AND MESOPOTAMIA,

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

PROPHECY.

BY ASAHEL GRANT, M.D.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following pages are submitted to the public with great deference. They were written partly amid the incessant toils of a missionary life, and partly during my homeward voyage. The constant pressure of other cares, and imperative duties, during my transient stay in my native land, has left no opportunity for re-writing the manuscript, and for correcting inaccuracies of style incident to an inexperienced writer, under circumstances so obviously unfavourable to careful composition.

But while, with this explanation, I would solicit the reader's indulgence in regard to the style and form of this essay, I am aware that whatever real value it may be found to possess, will depend essentially upon the facts it embodies. In this respect no effort has been spared to ensure accuracy. Constant attention to my duties as a missionary physician has brought me in contact with almost every class of the people among whom I have

travelled or sojourned, and has greatly multiplied my opportunities for observation. My professional character has procured me ready access to the retirement of the harem, and the social and domestic circles of all classes of the people. Every important particular has been carefully noted down on the spot, and I have endeavoured to preserve my mind from prejudice, and to guard against every source of error. I trust, therefore, that the facts here recorded, so far as they are derived from personal observation, will be deemed worthy of confidence. The public must decide whether the conclusions to which I have arrived are warranted by the data. I have only to remark, that these facts forced themselves upon my attention, and were not sought for to confirm a previously-formed theory.

In the course of my investigations, the want of access to original authorities has sometimes compelled me to quote from accredited compilers; but I have verified the quotations as far as possible, and it is believed that no valid objection can be made to them for the purposes which they were designed to subserve.

If the facts and arguments imbodyed in this

work should convince the candid reader, as I trust they will, that the Nestorian Christians are indeed the representatives and lineal descendants of the Ten Tribes, his attention will naturally revert to the prophecies which relate, either wholly or in part, to the house of Israel; and he will return to their perusal with increased interest, perhaps with clearer light. It is to be hoped, also, that he will excuse the author, if, under such circumstances, he has allowed his mind to range somewhat widely over the field of prophecy, and has appeared to encroach upon the peculiar province of the Biblical critic. Whatever may be thought of these speculations, it should be remembered that they in no way affect the facts we have adduced in relation to the main question, to the examination of which this work is chiefly devoted.

The small map which accompanies this work does not pretend to minute accuracy, but will be found to be more correct than any which has preceded it. It has been mostly compiled from one in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain for 1840, with the exception of that part of the country which had not been explored prior to my visit.

The chief contributions to geographical knowledge which I have been enabled to make, excepting the observations which relate to the country of the ten tribes, are, 1st, that the Hakary and Zâb rivers of former maps are only two names for one and the same stream; and, 2d, that the Habor rises in a different place and pursues a different course from what had been previously supposed. The former I have delineated upon the map from observations made with my compass; the latter, as described to me from time to time by the natives upon its borders.

In conclusion I would remark, that if my humble efforts prove the means of increasing the interest which has begun to be awakened in behalf of the Nestorian Christians, I shall return with renewed zeal to my arduous labours, cheered with the anticipation that a brighter day is about to dawn upon the remnant of Israel which is left from Assyria, and, through them, upon the Gentile world.

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**PART I.**



## CHAPTER I.

**Nestorian Mission.—Importance of a Physician.—Embarcation.—Smyrna.—Constantinople.—Black Sea.—Trebizond.—Tabreez.—Ooroomiah.—Character of the Nestorians.—Notice of the Mission.—Description of the Country.—Independent Nestorians.—Koords.**

THE Nestorian Christians, so memorable in the early annals of the Church, are emerging from that state of obscurity in which they have for many ages been almost lost sight of by the civilized world.

In consequence of the favourable report of Messrs. Smith and Dwight, who visited the Nestorians in Persia in the spring of 1831, under the patronage of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, that body soon resolved upon the formation of a mission among that interesting branch of the primitive Church. It was an untried and difficult field, but fraught, as was believed, with the brightest promise. At their annual meeting, held at Utica, N. Y., Oct., 1834, the Board of Missions presented a convincing and urgent plea for a suitable physician to engage in the incipient labours of that important mission.

The healing art, it was believed, might procure favour and protection, by affording convincing

proof of the benevolence of our motives ; for it is well known that to relieve the sufferings of the body is the most ready way of access to the heart. It would also procure access to places where none but a physician could go. But for more than a year the call had gone through the length and breadth of the land, and not a physician could be found to go.

In view of these considerations, I abandoned an increasing and delightful circle of practice in Utica, and, with Mrs. Grant, was on my way to Persia the following spring.

A pleasant voyage of forty-eight days brought us to Smyrna, the site of one of the Seven Churches in Asia. From thence, one of the first of those numerous steamers, which are now producing such changes in the East, conveyed us to Constantinople, the proud metropolis of Turkey. No steamer then ploughed the waves of the stormy Euxine, and we were wafted by the winds in a small American-built English schooner—once a slaver—to the port of Trebizonde.

From the shores of the Black Sea, the saddle became our only carriage for seven hundred miles, over the mountains and plains of Armenia to the sunny vales of Persia. On the loftier mountain summits, a corner of a stable sheltered us from the cold and storms : by the verdant banks of the Euphrates, and beneath the hoary summit of

Mount Ararat, we reposed under the canopy of our tent, while the bales and boxes of merchandise from the seven hundred horses and mules which composed our caravan, were thrown around in a hollow square, and served as a temporary fortress to protect us from the predatory Koords by whom we were surrounded. An escort of armed horsemen had been furnished by the pasha of Erzeroom to guard the caravan, and the stillness of the midnight hour was broken by the cry of the faithful sentinel who kept watch to warn us of danger. The strange customs and usages of an Oriental land, and the thousand novelties of the Old World, served to while away the hours as we pursued our onward course for twenty-eight days at the slow pace of an Eastern caravan.

We arrived at Tabreez, one of the chief commercial cities of Persia, on the 15th of October, 1835, and met with a cordial reception from the few English residents in the place, and from our respected associates, the Rev. Justin Perkins and lady, who had preceded us to this place. From his excellency the Right Honourable Henry Ellis, the British ambassador and envoy extraordinary at the court of Persia, with whom we had already formed a pleasant acquaintance at Trebizonde, we received the kindest offers of aid and protection; and I seize this occasion to acknowledge the same kind and unremitted favours

from his successors and other English gentlemen with whom we have met in the East.

After resting a few days at Tabreez, I proceeded to Ooroomiah, to make arrangements for the commencement of our contemplated station among the Nestorians in that province. My professional character secured the favour of the governor and of the people generally. Comfortable houses were soon provided, and on the 20th of November my associate arrived with our ladies. We entered upon our labours under the most encouraging auspices, and they have gone on prosperously up to the present time.

The sick, the lame, and the blind gathered around by scores and hundreds, and my fame was soon spread abroad through the surrounding country. We were regarded as public benefactors, and our arrival was hailed with general joy. The Nestorians, in particular, welcomed us with the greatest kindness and affection. Their bishops and priests took their seats at our table, bowed with us at our family altar, drank in instruction with child-like docility, and gave us their undivided influence and co-operation in the prosecution of our labours among their people. They regarded us as coadjutors with them in a necessary work of instruction and improvement, and not as their rivals or successors. We had come, not to pull down, but to build up; to promote knowledge and piety, and not to war against their external forms and rites.



We found much in their character to raise our hopes. They have the greatest reverence for the Scriptures, and were desirous to have them diffused among the people in a language which all could understand. In their feelings towards other sects they are charitable and liberal. In their forms, more simple and scriptural than the papal and the other Oriental churches. They abhor image worship, auricular confession, and the doctrine of purgatory; and hence they have broad common ground with Protestant Christians, so that, not inappropriately, they have been called the Protestants of Asia.

But they had, as a people, sunk into the darkness of ignorance and superstition: none but their clergy could read or write; the education of their females was entirely neglected; and they attached great importance to their numerous fasts and feasts, to the neglect of purity of heart and life. Still there are some who now appear to lead exemplary lives, and to sigh over the degradation of their people. Indeed, we cannot but hope that something of vital piety may have continued to burn upon their altars from the earliest ages of the Church, and we trust it will again shine forth in a resplendent flame.

In such a state of things, it is not surprising that we have been permitted to prosecute our labours

without a breath of opposition from the ecclesiastics or the people.

Twelve or fourteen freeschools have been opened in the villages of the plain; a seminary and girls' boarding-school have been established on the Mission premises in the city; considerable portions of the Scriptures have been translated into the vernacular language of the Nestorians. They have opened their churches for our Sabbath-schools and the preaching of the gospel; native helpers are being raised up and qualified for usefulness; our mission has been re-enforced by accessions from America, and a press, with suitable type, has been sent out.

The Rev. A. L. Holladay and Mr. William R. Stocking arrived with their wives, June 6th, 1837; Rev. Willard Jones and wife, November 7, 1839; Rev. A. H. Wright, M.D., July 25, 1840, and Mr. Edward Breath, a printer, has embarked with a press of such a construction as to admit of its transportation on horses from the shores of the Black Sea to Ooroomiah.

The province of Ooroomiah, in which the labours of the mission have thus far been prosecuted, comprises an important part of Ancient Media, and is situated in the northwestern part of the modern kingdom of Persia. It is separated by a lofty chain of snowy mountains from Ancient Assyria or Central Koordistan on the west; while on

the east the beautiful lake extends about eighty miles in length and thirty in width. The water of this lake is so salt that fish cannot live in it; its shores are enlivened by numerous water-fowl, of which the beautiful flamingo is most conspicuous, and sometimes lines the shore for miles in extent.

A plain of exuberant fertility is enclosed between the mountains and the lake, comprising an area of about five hundred square miles, and bearing upon its bosom no less than three hundred hamlets and villages. It is clothed with luxuriant verdure, fruitful fields, gardens, and vineyards, and irrigated by considerable streams of pure water from the adjacent mountains. The landscape is one of the most lovely in the East; and the effect is not a little heightened by the contrast of such surprising fertility with the stern aspect of the surrounding heights, on which not a solitary tree is to be seen; while in the plain, the willows, poplars, and sycamores by the water-courses, the peach, apricot, pear, plum, cherry, quince, apple, and vine, impart to large sections the appearance of a rich, variegated forest.

Near the centre of this plain stands the ancient city of Ooroomiah, containing a population of about twenty thousand souls, mostly Mohammedans, and enclosed by a fosse and wall of nearly four miles in circuit. At a little distance on the east of the city an ancient artificial mound rises to

the height of seventy or eighty feet, and marks the site, as it is said, of the ancient shrine or temple, where, in days of yore, the renowned Zoroaster kindled his sacred fires, and bowed in adoration to the heavenly hosts.

The climate is naturally very delightful; but, owing to local causes, a poisonous miasma is generated, occasioning fevers and the various diseases of malaria, to which the unacclimated stranger is specially exposed; and the mission families have suffered much from this cause. My late inestimable wife was the first victim of the climate we were called to mourn; and in her peaceful and triumphant death, she set the seal to the truths she had so faithfully taught and exemplified in her short but eventful life. She rested from her labours on the 12th of January, 1839; and her infant twin-daughters now repose by her side within the precincts of the ancient Nestorian church in the city of Ooroomiah.

In the month of February of that year I received instructions from the Board of Missions to proceed into Mesopotamia, to form a station among the Nestorians dwelling, as was supposed, on the west of the central mountains of Koordistan. By this means it was hoped that a safe way of access might be found to the main body of the Nestorian Christians, the independent tribes which have their abode in the most difficult fastnesses of the Koordish

mountains in the centre of Ancient Assyria. I had long regarded these mountain tribes as the principal field of our future labours. They comprised the main body of the Nestorian Church, and it was of the highest importance to bring them at once under an enlightening influence, before they should become alarmed by changes that were occurring among their brethren of the plain. But the way of access to them appeared to be hedged round by the sanguinary Koords, by whom they are surrounded, and who had treacherously murdered Mr. Shultz, the only European who had attempted to reach the Nestorian tribes.

The Koords, to whom frequent allusion will be made, are a warlike race of people, inhabiting the mountainous country between Persia and Turkey—the ancient Gordian or Carduchian Mountains—and divided nominally between those two empires. But their more powerful tribes have seldom acknowledged more than a nominal allegiance to either of these governments; and some of them, as those of Hakary, have maintained an entire independence. A part of them are nomads, living in tents, and part of them stationary tenants of villages; but all more or less given to predatory habits. Their religion is professedly the faith of Islam. The following dialogue, which I held with one of the nomadic Koords and a Nestorian bishop, may serve to illustrate the character of this

sanguinary people. Similar statements have frequently been made by other Koords, and confirmed by the Nestorians and Persians.

*Myself.* Where do you live ?

*Koord.* In black tents. We are Kouchee Koords.

*M.* What is your occupation ?

*Bishop.* You need not ask him. I will tell you. They are thieves.

*M.* Is that true, Koord ?

*K.* Yes, it is true. We steal whenever we can.

*M.* Do you kill people too ?

*K.* When we meet a man that we wish to rob, if we prove the strongest, we kill him. If he proves the strongest, he kills us.

*M.* But suppose he offers no resistance when you attempt to rob him ?

*K.* If he have much property, we would kill him to prevent his making us trouble. If he had not much, we would let him go.

*B.* Yes, after you had whipped him well.

*M.* Suppose you meet a poor man who had nothing but his clothes, what would you do ? Would you molest him ?

*K.* If his clothes were good, we would take them and give him poor ones in exchange. If not, we would let him pass.

*M.* But this is a bad business in which you are engaged, of robbing people. Why do you not follow some other occupation ?

*K.* What shall we do? We have no ploughs or fields; and robbing is our trade.

*M.* The Persians will give you land if you will cultivate it.

*K.* We do not know how to work.

*M.* It is very easy to learn. Will you make the trial?

*B.* He does not wish to work. He had rather steal.

*K.* He speaks the truth. It would be very difficult, and take a long time to get what we want by working for it; but by robbing a village, we can get a great deal of property in a single night.

*M.* But you are liable to be killed in these affairs.

*K.* Suppose we are killed. We must die some time, and what is the difference of dying now or a few days hence? When we rob a village, we go in large parties upon horses, surprise the villagers when they are asleep, and escape with their property before they are ready to defend themselves. If pursued by an army, we strike our tents and flee to our strongholds in the mountains.

*M.* Why do you not come and rob these villages, as you used to do?

*B.* They could not live if driven out of Persia. They fear the Persians.

*K.* We should have no other place to winter



our flocks ; so we give the Persians some presents, and keep at peace with them.

*M.* I wish to visit your tribe. How would they treat me ?

*K.* Upon my eyes, they would do everything for you.

*M.* But you say they are thieves and murderers. Perhaps they would rob and kill me.

*K.* No, no ; they wish to have you come, but you are not willing. We never rob our friends. You come to do good, and no one would hurt you.

*M.* But many of them do not know me.

*K.* They have all heard of you, and would treat you with the greatest kindness if you should visit them.

## CHAPTER II.

Practicability of visiting the Mountain Nestorians.—Journey to Constantinople.—Storm in the Mountains.—Journey to Mesopotamia, Diarbékir, and Mardin.—Providential Escape.

A BROTHER of the Nestorian patriarch, who visited us at Ooroomiah, and a Koordish chief whom I had seen in his castle at Burdasoor, had expressed the opinion that my professional character would procure me a safe passport to any part of the Koordish Mountains, and, from what I had learned in my frequent intercourse with the Koords, I had reason to believe that I might safely pass through the Koordish territory and enter the country of the Independent Nestorians.

My own impressions were that I should be able to enter the country of the Independent Nestorians from the Persian frontier, and I advised this plan. But this was not assented to, and, in pursuance of the instructions of the Board to proceed by way of Mesopotamia, I set out from Ooroomiah on the first of April, 1839, for Erzeroom, where I had proposed to meet my expected associate, the Rev. Mr. Homes, of Constantinople, who was to be temporarily associated with me in this enterprise.

On my arrival at Salmas, I received a letter from him, apprizing me that the brethren at Con-

Constantinople had decided against his entering upon the tour, under the apprehension that my late affections would put it out of my power to fulfil the plans of the Board in the formation of a permanent station. I looked upon this as another among the many indications of Providence which had come before us, in favour of my plan of entering the mountains from the Persian frontier. I wrote to our mission for advice, repeating my conviction of the importance of the measure I had before urged upon them, of entering the mountains before proceeding to Mesopotamia. The political state of the latter country was mentioned as one consideration in favour of this course. My letter was also accompanied by the assurance of the governor of Salmas, that he would do everything to secure the success of the enterprise, and that he did not doubt but the facilities he could furnish would enable me to go and return in safety. But still there was not a majority in the mission in favour of my entering the mountains, and I was advised to proceed to join Mr. Homes, and enter upon the proposed tour in Mesopotamia.

I accordingly proceeded with as much expedition as possible to Constantinople. An unusual quantity of snow had fallen late in the season, and my journey proved one of extreme difficulty and of no little peril. For more than two hundred miles I found the snow from two to three or four

feet in depth, although it was the middle of April when I crossed this elevated portion of Armenia. On the great plain at the foot of Mount Ararat we encountered one of the most severe storms of snow I had ever experienced, and came near perishing in the mountains beyond, where the storm met us with increased fury. For more than twenty miles of this dreary road there was not a single human habitation. Our guide, about midway, became so much blinded by the snow that he could not keep the road, and I was obliged to take his place, and trust to the recollection of my former journey four years before, and the occasional traces of the path which was here and there swept bare by the driving wind. As we began to descend the mountains on the opposite side, where the wind had not done us this important service, I was obliged to walk several miles, tracing the narrow path in the deep snow with my feet. I could only determine when I was out of the old beaten path, which lay beneath the new-fallen snow, by the depth to which I sunk in the frosty element. Our horses also became almost buried in the snow the moment they stepped out of the road.

While crossing the plain near the head-waters of the Euphrates, where Xenophon and the Ten Thousand suffered so much in their memorable retreat, my Nestorian attendant, and a pilgrim who had joined us, became nearly blind from the continued

intense glare of the snow. This and a severe storm detained us two days at Moolah-Sooleiman, where we were most hospitably entertained in a stable, with forty or fifty head of horned cattle, horses, donkeys, and fowls, while the sheep occupied another apartment in the same house. In these and other particulars I found a striking coincidence with the experience of the brave Ten Thousand; and the dwellings and habits of the people were essentially the same as those described by Xenophon more than two thousand years ago. The houses were built mostly under ground, and the villages at a distance resembled a collection of large coal-pits, but broader and not so high.

Our next stage was over the mountain-pass of Dahar, the most difficult between Constantinople and Persia. The recollection of what Messrs. Smith and Dwight experienced in their passage over this mountain, together with the fact that three natives had perished in the snow not long before, prepared me to expect a toilsome and difficult ride. But delay was not likely to make any improvement for many days to come; and, moreover, a storm of rain had set in on the plain, which would soon quite obstruct the road, as the horse would sink to his middle at every step. As we began to ascend the mountain, we found the rain changed to snow, and accompanied by a strong wind, which soon increased to a gale. When about two thirds of the

way up the mountain, the guide, who professed to be well acquainted with the road, led us into such deep snows that our hardy horses were unable to proceed, and it became evident that we had wandered from the path. After much difficulty we succeeded in finding it; but it was soon lost again, and the guide, after a fruitless search, declared it impossible to proceed. To turn back was nearly as hopeless, as the snow had filled our tracks almost as soon as they were made, and as the wind would then be in our faces. Under these circumstances, I felt that our hope was alone in God; but with his assurance that he would direct the path of those who acknowledge him in all their ways, I felt that he would order all for the best, though in what manner or to what end I could not foresee. Just then, as unexpected as if an angel had descended from heaven, four hardy mountaineers came tramping over the snow from the opposite side of the mountain. With much difficulty we prevailed upon one of them to act as our guide; and by breaking down the high drifts of snow with our feet, and leading our horses where we could not ride, we at length succeeded in passing the mountains. There had been no horse across since the heavy storm a week before, and the old path could only be found in many places by striking a heavy cudgel deep into the snow; and our guide seldom mistook the road when he found his

long staff strike on a hard foundation without sinking its length in the snow.

The next day we found ourselves in the valley of the Aras, where a warm sun, and heavy continued rains had swelled every rill to a fearful torrent; and we had as imminent danger in crossing the streams which lay in our way as we had before experienced from mountain storms. In one of these mountain-torrents my horse was carried away, but finally succeeded in reaching the shore, when I had to ride several miles with my boots full of water as cold as the melting snow. On reaching the west branch of the Euphrates, I found the bridge had fallen in the night, and we only succeeded in crossing after the villagers had waded about in the cold water up to their waist for nearly an hour. At first they pronounced the ford impracticable, but finally succeeded in getting us across where the water came quite up on our saddles. Several other bridges were carried away, and in one instance I took a circuitous route, and crossed the stream in its separate branches near its source.

On arriving at Constantinople I found that Mr. Homes could not then be spared from that station, and, with the concurrence of the brethren, I resolved to proceed alone into Mesopotamia, it being understood that I should remain in or near Diarbékir until Mr. Homes should join me. I accord-

ingly made what haste I could to that field. From Trebizonde I rode in less than three days to Erzeroum, a distance by the winter route of at least 220 miles, and over a very mountainous road. On my route to Diarbékir, where I arrived on the 30th of May, I found great difficulty in crossing some of the lofty mountains, owing to the great quantity of snow which remained upon their summits at that late season, while immense avalanches had formed bridges of snow and ice over some of the foaming torrents which dashed through the narrow ravines. The bridge over the Euphrates at Paloo had been carried away, and I crossed the river on a raft of inflated skins, like those mentioned by Xenophon in his retreat of the Ten Thousand.

On my arrival at Diarbékir,\* I found the public mind in that state of suspense and expectation which could be compared to nothing but the calm which precedes an overwhelming storm, and soon it came, with terror and devastation in its course. The signal defeat and almost entire dispersion of the Turkish army was first publicly announced in that city by hundreds of soldiers fleeing from the battle-field, who had been stripped of their apparel and all that they had by the Koords, who had

\* Diarbékir is on the river Tigris, in latitude about 37° north, and about 40° east longitude. Mardîn is about sixty miles south by west from Diarbékir.



taken possession of the roads. From that time the reign of violence and anarchy commenced, and robberies and murders were the order of the day. Scarcely a man dared leave the walls of the city without a large party to accompany him. Each man robbed the man he met, and the arm of the strongest was the only law. The governor, it is true, made an attempt to preserve the peace, and had the heads of five Koords and about forty ears hung up in the bazars, to deter others from committing violence upon the persons and property of the citizens. But these same bazars, two days after, were the theatre of most open and daring robberies. The defeat of the army having been ascribed by the mass of the people to the European uniform and tactics or the *Nezâm*, great opposition was raised against it, and against all Europeans as the reputed cause of it. This spirit, under the influence of Moslem bigotry, and a jealousy lest, in the weak state of the country, Christianity would rise upon the ruins of Islâm, was carried to such an extent, that we not only heard ourselves cursed in the streets as infidel dogs, but, as it is said, there was a determination expressed to kill all the Europeans in the place. What this threat might have resulted in, had we remained in the city, it is impossible to say; but I now learn that some Mussulmans came to our house after we left it with evil intentions concerning us.

Having been joined by Mr. Homes, we proceeded to Mardîn on the 10th of July, accompanied by an escort of thirty horse, half of which were furnished by the governor and half were returning to Mardîn. We had two objects in proceeding thus far during the disturbed state of the country: to avoid the hot and unhealthy climate of Diarbêkir, where the temperature was then at 98° in the shade, and daily increasing; and to extend our inquiries among the Syrian Christians. We had been but a few days at Mardîn, when our lives were openly threatened, and the governor, who declared himself without authority, advised us to remain in our house for some days, and also offered us a guard for defence. We did not think it best to manifest any particular apprehensions, and declined the guard, only keeping quiet in our intercourse with the people. After a while this spirit of hatred to us as Christians seemed to die away, and we appeared to have the confidence and friendship of most or all of the chief men of the place, among whom were the governor, the mufti, and the cadi, whom we visited on friendly terms. But at length a catastrophe arrived, in which we should in all probability have fallen the victims of a bigoted and infuriated populace, had not that kind hand, which had carried us safely through so many dangers, interposed to save us.

On the sixth of September, the Koords of Mar

din rose in insurrection, and in open day, in the court of the public palace, killed their late governor and several more of the chief men of the place, and then came with their bloody weapons to the house where Mr. Homes and myself were residing, with the avowed intention of adding us to the number of the slain! calling out to know where we were. Most providentially, we had just left the city, and, when we returned, we found the gates closed to prevent the rescue or escape of any of the intended victims. It seemed as though some guardian angel had led us out of the danger, and then shut us out. Seeing a great commotion within, we retired to a convent of Syrian Christians a few miles distant, where we met with a kind reception, and remained some days, until the commotion subsided.

A few days before, these sanguinary men had murdered an influential native Christian in his bed, and then openly declared that it was an act of religious charity, for which God would reward them, to put Christians to death!

Such is a very faint sketch of the difficulties and dangers which beset my path after entering upon this enterprise. Moreover, after long and patient inquiry, we found that there are no Nestorians remaining on the western side of the Koordish mountains; all those who formerly resided this side the mountains having become papists, or removed to other parts. In view of these considerations,

which left so little hope of doing good, while so much peril was involved, my associate resolved to leave this field, and return to his station at Constantinople. In this he was supported by the advice of brethren both at Constantinople and Smyrna; and, in our peculiar circumstances, I could not withhold my approbation; but, with a full view of the trials which might lie before me in my solitary journey onward, I yielded a cordial and cheerful acquiescence.

I was forty days in Diarbékir, and Mr. Homes and myself spent two months in Mardîn. They were days of mingled solicitude and pleasure, and not to be forgotten while memory remains. I had but just arisen from a sick-bed, on which the tide of life seemed for a time fast ebbing to its close, when the catastrophe I have described took place. The events of that day, and the Divine interposition by which we were preserved, tended not a little to strengthen my faith, and arm me for whatever perils might still beset my path.

## CHAPTER III.

Departure from Mardîn.—Plain of Mesopotamia.—Môsul.—Ruins of Nineveh.—Yezidees, or Worshippers of the Devil.

WITHIN the dilapidated walls of an ancient Christian church, which stands alone in a mountain ravine on the verge of the great plain of Mesopotamia, and is overlooked by the impregnable fortress of Mardîn, I exchanged the parting embrace with my "brother and companion in tribulation," the Rev. Mr. Homes, with whom I had spent more than two months of anxious repose, and shared the most imminent peril of life. On account of the general anarchy which reigned around us, we had travelled together scarcely two days; but I had learned, when prostrated on a bed of sickness, and surrounded by men of violence and blood, how to prize the company of a Christian friend; and it was not without a mutual struggle that we yielded to the convictions of duty, and tore away from each other's society to pursue, in opposite directions, the long and arduous journeys that lay before us. But, while the voice of Providence called him to return to his station in the metropolis of Turkey, to me it seemed to cry, Onward.

The hope of obtaining access to the mountain

tribes of Nestorians from this quarter was among the first motives to the undertaking in which I had embarked, and I resolved to spare no effort to effect this important object; for, while no one dared to advise the undertaking, lest I should fall a victim to the sanguinary character of the surrounding Koords, every friend of the mission was most desirous to see it accomplished.

It was also important that more should be known of the city of M<sup>o</sup>sul and the adjacent country; and I resolved to proceed thither, with the hope that I should obtain more light on the question of entering the mountains from that point, intending, if I finally failed in my efforts to reach the field to which my anxious attention had been so long directed, to turn my steps by a more southern route towards my former abode on the plains of Persia.

To secure our effects and make other preliminary arrangements for my journey, I returned to the gates of Mard<sup>i</sup>n, whence Mr. H. and myself had been led out, as if by Mercy's angel, to escape sharing in the tragic scene enacted in the court of the public palace a week before. The bustle of the streets was dying away as evening drew on, and so changed was my aspect, in the Oriental robes and turban I had assumed, that I passed on without recognition, and remained in quiet tranquillity two days within the walls of the town so

recently the scene of anarchy and misrule. But the storm had spent itself in its own violence; and, while I was there, the surrounding mountains reverberated the roar of artillery, which announced from the walls of the lofty castle, that the town had been placed under the vigorous government of Mohammed Pashâ of Môsul. This extension of his rule added not a little to the safety of my route over the vast plain of Mesopotamia; and, after a journey of nearly two hundred miles, I found myself securely lodged within the walls of Môsul, on the morning of the 20th of September, 1839.

As my journal up to the time of my departure from that city was left there, with most of my effects, for safe keeping, I cannot now lead the reader through the exciting scenes and romantic incidents which beset my path through this home of the ancient patriarchs. The spirit-stirring sketches of Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel, portrayed in such lovely simplicity by the inspired historian, were held up in living characters in the person of the young shepherdess watering her father's flocks at the wells of Mesopotamia, or carrying her replenished pitcher at the close of day; and in the black tents of the wandering Arab, so proverbially changeless in his habits. I seemed to be carried back four thousand years on the wings of time, to hold converse with the father of the faith-

ful, while leading the same pastoral life on this extended plain.

On this part of my route I was favoured with the agreeable society and kind attentions of Captain Conolly, an intelligent English officer, who had, through many dangers, reached Mardîn, on his way to India with despatches. I felt the exhilaration of returning strength after my late severe illness; and our journey was enlivened with the sight of fleet herds of antelopes, which scoured the boundless desert, and a slight altercation with a band of Koordish banditti, who lay in ambush to intercept and rob us. But we gained possession of an eminence that commanded their position, and, with a small party of Arab horsemen with long spears, who had been sent for our protection by the chief whose encampment we had recently left, we presented such a formidable aspect that the robbers lowered their guns and suffered us to pass quietly on our way.

At Mêsul I found the country in a more quiet state, under the rule of their vigorous pasha. My observations upon this place were soon completed, and my preparations made to proceed on my route. The Nestorians who once inhabited this district have all embraced the Romish faith and become *Chaldeans*, as the papal Nestorians are usually called. They mostly inhabit the villages on the east of the Tigris; and Elkôsh, with its con-



vent of Rabba Hormuz, is the chief seat of their influence. Their patriarch resides at Bagdad, where there are but few of their people. He was educated at the Propagandi in Rome, and is a zealous supporter of his holiness the pope. He receives his appointment directly from Rome, and is in no way connected with the Nestorian Church. That church has but the single patriarch, Mar Shimon, who resides in the mountains near Julamerk, and who will be hereafter described. The lineal descendants of the patriarch Elias of Elkösh are all connected with the Church of Rome, and the last pretender to that sect is now a bishop of the papal Chaldean Church. In the year 1834 he went to Ooroomiah, and told the Nestorians of that district that he had returned to the ancient faith of his fathers, and that he would bring over all the Chaldeans to the same faith if the Nestorians would acknowledge him as their spiritual head. But it afterward proved that his professions were quite faithless; and he has since been actively engaged in efforts to proselyte the Nestorians to the papal religion.

There are about five hundred families of the Jacobite, and as many of the papal Syrians in Mûsul and its vicinity; but the Jacobite Syrians have their chief seat in Mesopotamia, and in their doctrines and practice they are more allied to the Armenians than to the Nestorians.

On the morning of the 7th of October I bade adieu to M<sup>o</sup>sul, with its thirty thousand inmates, on my way towards the unexplored mountains of central Koordistan, accompanied by two Nestorians of Persia, a Koordish muleteer, and a Turkish *cavass* (police officer) from the pasha.

My passport was demanded and examined at the gate of the city, a formality of recent date in Turkey, and quite unknown in Persia. We came at once upon the Tigris, from which the city is supplied with water, conveyed in leathern sacks upon horses and mules, and in pitchers upon the shoulders of the poor. The bridge of boats was thronged with a motley crowd of Koords, Arabs, Turks, Christians, and Jews, clad in their various and grotesque costumes; and, in their confused jargon of dissonant voices, bearing unequivocal testimony to the curse of Babel. Their camels, mules, horses, bullocks, and donkeys were laden with the various produce of the country, with which the markets are crowded at an early hour in the morning, especially at this season of the year, when grain, fruits, melons, and vegetables are cheap and abundant. Some of the loads had fallen upon the bridge, increasing the confusion, which already threatened to precipitate man and beast into the deep and rapid current of the Tigris, which was then about 150 yards wide at that place, though much broader at high water. The

Orientalists are agreed that this and the Euphrates are two of the rivers which watered the paradise of Eden; and the original name Hiddekel, or Deg-leh, is preserved by the Christians and Jews; but the other two rivers they are unable to identify, and their notions of the situation of that primitive cradle of our race are altogether confused or visionary. But, while the blissful bowers of Eden are no more, the fruit of the fall everywhere abounds, and fills these fair portions of the earth with tears and blood.

The passage of the Tigris transferred me from Mesopotamia into Assyria, and I stood upon the ruins of Nineveh, "that great city," where the prophet Jonah proclaimed the dread message of Jehovah to so many repenting thousands, whose deep humiliation averted for a time the impending ruin. But when her proud monarchs had scourged idolatrous Israel, and carried the ten tribes into captivity, and raised their hands against Judah and the holy city, the inspired strains of the eloquent Nahum, clothed in terrible sublimity as they were, met their full accomplishment in the utter desolation of one of the largest cities on which the sun ever shone. "Nineveh is laid waste! who will bemoan her? She is empty, and void, and waste; her nobles dwell in the dust; her people are scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them."

Where her gorgeous palaces once resounded to the strains of music and the shouts of revelry, a few black tents of the wandering Arab and Tûrkomân are now scattered among the shapeless mounds of earth and rubbish—the ruins of the city—as if in mockery of her departed glory; while their tenants were engaged in the fitting employment of weaving “sackcloth of hair,” as if for the mourning attire of the world’s great emporium, whose “merchants” were “multiplied above the stars of heaven.” The largest mound, from which very ancient relics and inscriptions are dug, is now crowned with the Moslem village of Neby Yûnas, or the prophet Jonah, where his remains are said to be interred, and over which has been reared, as his mausoleum, a temple of Islâm.

Soon after leaving the ruins of Nineveh we came in sight of two villages of the Yezidees, the reputed worshippers of the devil. Large and luxuriant olive-groves, with their rich green foliage and fruit just ripening in the autumnal sun, imparted such a cheerful aspect to the scene as soon dispelled whatever of pensive melancholy had gathered around me while treading upon the dust of departed greatness. Several white sepulchres of Yezidee sheikhs attracted attention as I approached the villages. They were in the form of fluted cones or pyramids, standing upon quadrangular bases, and rising to the height of some twenty feet

or more. We became the guests of one of the chief Yezidees of Baasheka, whose dwelling, like others in the place, was a rude stone structure, with a flat terrace roof. Coarse felt carpets were spread for our seats in the open court, and a formal welcome was given us, but it was evidently not a very cordial one. My Turkish cavass understood the reason, and at once removed it. Our host had mistaken me for a Mohammedan, towards whom the Yezidees cherish a settled aversion. As soon as I was introduced to him as a Christian, and he had satisfied himself that this was my true character, his whole deportment was changed. He at once gave me a new and cordial welcome, and set about supplying our wants with new alacrity. He seemed to feel that he had exchanged a Moslem foe for a Christian friend, and I became quite satisfied of the truth of what I had often heard, that the Yezidees are friendly towards the professors of Christianity.

They are said to cherish a high regard for the Christian religion, of which clearly they have some corrupt remains. They practise the rite of baptism, make the sign of the cross, so emblematical of Christianity in the East, put off their shoes and kiss the threshold when they enter a Christian church; and it is said that they often speak of wine as the blood of Christ, hold the cup with both hands, after the sacramental manner of the East,

when drinking it, and, if a drop chance to fall on the ground, they gather it up with religious care.

They believe in one supreme God, and, in some sense at least, in Christ as a saviour. They have also a remnant of Sabianism, or the religion of the ancient fire-worshippers. They bow in adoration before the rising sun, and kiss his first rays when they strike on a wall or other object near them; and they will not blow out a candle with their breath or spit in the fire, lest they should defile that sacred element.

Circumcision and the passover, or a sacrificial festival allied to the passover in time and circumstance, seem also to identify them with the Jews; and, altogether, they certainly present a most singular chapter in the history of man.

Their system of faith has points of strong resemblance to the ancient Manichean heresy; and it is probable that they are a remnant of that heretical sect. This idea derives support from the fact, that they seem to have originated in the region where Manes first laboured and propagated his tenets with the greatest success; and from the coincidence of the name of their reputed founder or most revered teacher, Adde, with an active disciple of Manes of the same name and place of abode. If Adde of the Yezidees and of the Manicheans was one and the same, the circumstance at once reconciles their remains of Christian forms

and sentiments, with the testimony of the Syrian and Nestorian Christians around them, to their Christian origin, and throws important light upon the early history of this remarkable people. Their Christian attachments, if not their origin, should at least plead strongly to enlist the sympathies of Christians in their behalf, while it holds out cheering encouragement for us to labour for their good.

That they are really the worshippers of the devil can only be true, if at all, in a modified sense, though it is true that they pay him so much deference as to refuse to speak of him disrespectfully (perhaps for fear of his vengeance); and, instead of pronouncing his name, they call him the "lord of the evening," or "prince of darkness;" also, Sheikh Maazen, or Exalted Chief. Some of them say that Satan was a fallen angel with whom God was angry; but he will at some future day be restored to favour, and there is no reason why they should treat him with disrespect. It may be found that their notions of the evil being are derived from the Ahriman of the ancient magi, and the secondary or evil deity of the Manicheans, which was evidently ingrafted on the Oriental philosophy. Some of the ancient Nestorian writers speak of them as of Hebrew descent: a question which I shall examine more at length in another place in this volume.

The Christians of Mesopotamia report that the

Yezidees make votive offerings to the devil, by throwing money and jewels into a certain deep pit in the mountains of Sinjar, where a large portion of them reside; and it is said that when that district, which has long been independent, was subjugated by the Turks, the pasha compelled the Yezidee priest to disclose the place, and then plundered it of a large treasure, the offerings of centuries. The Yezidees here call themselves Daseni, probably from the ancient name of the district, Dasen, which was a Christian bishopric in early times. Their chief place of concourse, the religious temple of the Yezidees, is said to have once been a Christian church or convent. The late Mr. Rich speaks of the Yezidees as "lively, brave, hospitable, and good-humoured;" and adds that, "under the British government, much might be made of them." Can nothing be made of them under the gospel? and will not the effort be made? Môsul is a central position from which to approach them, and they may well form an important object of attention for a mission in that city. The Nestorians claim them as a branch of their Church; and there are other reasons why they might well be included in our labours for the improvement of that people. Many of the Nestorians speak the Koordish language, which is spoken by the Yezidees, and they would prove most important and valuable coadjutors in our labours for their conversion,



while, at the same time, an opportunity would at once be afforded for the development of the missionary zeal which once so greatly animated the Nestorian Church, and which we aim and expect, by the blessing of God, speedily to revive.

The precise number of the Yezidees it is difficult to estimate, so little is known of them; but it is probable that we must reckon them by tens of thousands, instead of the larger computations which have been made by some travellers who have received their information merely from report. Still they are sufficiently numerous to form an important object of attention to the Christian Church; and I trust, as we learn more about them, sympathy, prayer, and effort will be enlisted in their behalf. It will be a scene of no ordinary interest when the voice of prayer and praise to God shall ascend from hearts now devoted to the service of the prince of darkness, "the worshippers of the devil!" May that day be hastened on.

Continuing in a northeast course, in two hours we came in sight of the ancient convent of Mar Matta (St. Matthew), which is said to have stood about fifteen hundred years. It occupies a bold position on the steep, rocky acclivity of a mountain, which I ascended on a mule, after receiving a charge to hold fast to his mane to keep from falling backward in the steep, zigzag ascent. It has been deserted in consequence of the ravages of the

Ravendoos Koords, who overrun this region six or seven years ago, committing sad havoc particularly among the poor Yezidees. A cool fountain in a cave, which is shaded by a pretty arbour and the overhanging rock, invited to repose, but I had not time long to admire its beauties; and, after surveying the extended and charming prospect, I hastened to the little village of Meirik, where my companions were waiting for me to partake of the plain collation of melons, etc., which the poor Yezidees of the place had prepared.

We then hastened on through an opening in the hills, and just at dusk reached another village of the Yezidees, called Mohammed-Ravshan, where we stopped for the night. Our ride was enlivened by the sight of small herds of antelopes, which skipped fleetly over the hills, or gratified their curiosity by gazing at us at a safe distance from our path. We also met a number of Koords, who gave me the friendly salutation (which a Turk accords to the true believers alone) of "Peace be with you."

Two monuments of the description of those I have mentioned, but of a much larger size, were very conspicuous objects near the village; but fatigue and the lateness of the hour prevented me from making a particular examination of them. The accommodations which the village afforded were of the poorest kind; and, to avoid the ver-

min of the houses, we spread our carpets in the open street, and, after a social chat and a mess of pottage, made of sour buttermilk and herbs boiled together, I lay down under the broad canopy of heaven, committing myself to the ever-watchful care of heaven's great Architect.

There is little or no dew in these countries, and the natives usually sleep in the open air through the summer. The people of a whole village may often be seen making their toilet upon the tops of their flat-roof houses at dawn of day.

## CHAPTER IV.

Battle-ground of Alexander.—Akra and its Scenery.—Reception by a Koordish Chief.—Journey to Amâdieh.

*October 8, 1839.*—My slumbers were disturbed by slight showers of rain which fell in the night. This proved a fortunate circumstance, as I was thus awakened just in time to hear the neighing of my horse and secure him, as he was moving off under very suspicious circumstances, his halter having been loosened probably by robbers, who fled on the outcry and pursuit which was made.

At dawn of day we mounted, and soon entered upon an extensive and very level plain, watered by the Gomela and Hazir, or Chaser rivers, which we soon after forded a few miles above their junction. Geographers are agreed that the latter is the Bumadus, upon which the famous and decisive battle was fought between the legions of Darius and Alexander; and the extent and situation of this plain, with its relative distance from Arbela,\* whither the Macedonian army pursued the vanquished monarch of Persia, and which gave name to the battle, seem to denote this as the probable theatre of that memorable scene of blood

\* Six hundred stadia, according to Arrian.

and carnage. Such was the opinion of my friend, Colonel Sheil, who skirted its northern bounds in his late tour in Koordistan;\* and the opinion receives support from the use, by the ancient Syrian writers, of the significant name Beth Garmæ or Beit Germe, "the Place of Bones," for a district which must have been situated nearly in this position; doubtless from the bleaching skeletons of the three hundred thousand slaughtered Persians who were left on the field. What a fitting monument to the memory of the world's great conqueror, "Place of Bones!"†

Beth Garmæ appears to have once contained a large population of Nestorian Christians, as it is mentioned by Amrus and Elias of Damascus, in connexion with Adiabene and other contiguous places, as one of seven metropolitan bishoprics whose prelates elected and ordained the patriarch.‡ The Nestorians are now reduced to a few scattered villages on the northern border of the district, and this fertile plain is still desolated by the ravages of war. Within the last six years the Koords of Ravendoos and of Amâdieh have successively swept over it, and the present year the finishing stroke in its desolation has been given by the

\* Published in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society for 1838.

† *Assem Bibliothek Orient*, vol. ii., p. 177.

‡ *Bib. Orient*, vol. ii., p. 458-9.

Turkish army under the pashas of M<sup>o</sup>sul and Bagdad.

The ill-fated inhabitants sought shelter in the adjacent mountains during each successive storm ; and, when I passed, a miserable remnant of them had just returned to repair their dilapidated dwellings, and prepare for approaching winter. In answer to our inquiries for food, some of them said they had not bread to eat themselves, and begged us to supply their necessities. In other villages, a scanty remnant of their harvest had been gathered in ; and the straw, which is cut up fine by threshing instruments having great iron teeth, was piled in heaps, and covered over with earth, like the small conical coalpits in America, to preserve it from the storms. Near the border of the plain, some of the largest cotton I have seen in the East was still standing, testifying to the exuberant fertility of the soil ; but it is sown so densely that it cannot attain the size of the cotton in our southern states.

About three P.M. we approached the romantic little town of Akra, imbosomed in gardens and fruit orchards, which, for beauty, variety, and fertility, are unrivalled even in the East. For a mile before reaching the town, our path was imbow-ered in arbours of pomegranates, blending their golden and crimson hues, contrasted with the rich green olive and the more luscious but humble fig,

and interspersed with the peach, apricot, plum, and cherry; while the unpretending blackberry lined our avenue, and held out its fruit for me to gather while seated upon my saddle. It was the first fruit of the kind I had seen since leaving the shores of my native land, and it was welcomed as a friend of my early days, bringing with it tender recollections of "home, sweet home!"

This delightful rural scenery is strikingly contrasted with the bold and bare rocks of the main range of the Koordish mountains, that rise abruptly from the foot of the town, which is overlooked by the now ruined castle, perched upon one of the nearest and most precipitous cliffs, once their "rock of defence." The castle had just been demolished by the Turks, who carried the rebellious chief a prisoner to Bagdad, and placed another Koord of the same ancient family over the district of Amâdieh. To visit this chief, and secure his protection while in his territory, was the occasion of my visit to Akra, which required about two days' ride farther than the direct route from Mûsul to Amâdieh by the way of Elkôsh or Dehook. But I had no reason to regret the extension of my journey.

The pasha welcomed me with all the politeness of the most polished Oriental, or, I should rather say, Persian, for he had nothing of the stiff hauteur of the Turk. He rose from his carpet as I

entered the tent, and gave me a seat by his side. But scarcely had the first compliments been exchanged, when he held out his hand for me to feel his pulse, saying that he had long been ill, and he regarded my visit as a special favour from God; at the same time tendering me a pressing invitation to remain with him some days. As he spoke Turkish and Persian fluently, as well as his native Koordish, I found no difficulty for the want of a medium of communication; and we conversed freely upon a variety of topics. But, when at length he spoke of the fallen fortunes of his family, which claims descent from the Abbasside caliphs of Bagdad, and till recently, as he affirmed, had held independent sway over no less than twelve hundred villages in these mountains, I could not but regard the topic as one of great delicacy, especially as what we should say might be carried by the birds of the air to the now dominant authorities, where nothing but evil could be the result. I therefore evaded a direct reply, and changed the conversation by deserved encomiums upon the charms of the scenery by which we were surrounded; for this chief was spending the early part of autumn in his tents, amid the enchanting gardens I have mentioned, while two beautiful rivulets murmured through the vales on either side. Just then, a fine little son of the chief, scarcely eight years of age, came in with a smiling face,



bearing in his hand a large pomegranate, which he had used as a mark, and perforated by a ball from his rifle. A suitable present was immediately ordered for the young marksman by the chief, who appeared much delighted with this proof of his son's proficiency in the most essential element of a Koord's education.

To handle skilfully the instruments of death, and bound fearlessly over the roughest ground on their fiery steeds, are the highest accomplishments with these bold mountaineers. Some knowledge of letters is also acquired by the men of rank, and there are instances of females learning to read the Korân. Indeed, the Koords often manifest an inquisitiveness for general information that indicates a disposition for improvement truly encouraging; and they may yet prove a most hopeful class for missionary enterprise. By their Turkish neighbours, they are often called by an appellation which signifies "half Mohammedan," as if it was believed that they are less attached to their religion than the Turks.

Before I took leave of the chief, he gave to the cavass from Môsul a receipt for my safe delivery into his hands, with just the same formality as though I had been a bale of goods; and he would be held equally accountable for my safety while in the bounds of his jurisdiction; as he is immediately responsible to the pasha of Môsul. He then or-

dered a young Koord in attendance to be ready to accompany me on my departure.

I remained two nights in Akra, and, by invitation, spent the second evening with the local Turkish governor from M<sup>o</sup>sul, who had indulged so freely in brandy, to counteract the deleterious effects of the bad water, as he alleged, that he was fast verging upon delirium tremens. To calm his perturbed spirits, he had called together about twenty of the chief citizens, while a skilful musician had taken the place of David before Saul, to dispel the evil spirit by the soft, soothing strains of the harp. It was an instrument of seventy-two strings (or wires), of which sixty-four were remaining, and the music was altogether harmonious and agreeable.

Akra was once the seat of one of the numerous schools of the Nestorians; but the only remains of this sect in the district are to be found scattered through some twenty or more villages, some of which I afterward visited. Those in the town have become Chaldeans (i. e., papists), and they and the Jacobite Syrians have each a church excavated from the rocks of the mountain. They scarcely number thirty households in the town, and one of their priests told me that he was quite dependant on his own exertions for subsistence. The whole population may amount to two thousand souls. In the district the Chaldeans are more

numerous than the Nestorians. Just over the mountains, in Zebârri, are a few Nestorian villages, subject to the Koords. On the other side of the river Zâb, which is about ten or twelve miles to the east, there are some Chaldean and Nestorian Christians, subject to the bey of Ravendoos. But it is impossible to gain accurate statistical information in such a country, without remaining some time with the people.

*Oct. 10.*—Before entering the difficult mountains I was about to traverse, I sold my last horse; and, mounted on a hardy mule which I had hired, I set off at sunrise, and for ten or twelve miles pursued a westerly course along the foot of the main range of mountains. I then entered a pass to the north, which brought me to the river Hazir, which I followed to near its source, a few miles west of the fortress of Amâdieh, where I arrived on the third day from Akra. The road through Zebârri is more direct, but it is also more difficult, and the Koords were not in the most peaceable mood.

On the first day from Akra I passed three or four Nestorian villages, the largest of which had a population of nearly one thousand souls; also a village inhabited by Jews speaking the Nestorian language; and at night we lodged in a Koordish hamlet, where the people had a blood-feud with another village through which we passed, and which lay in sight. Three men had been killed

from one of them, and only two from the other, and now the former were trying to make up the balance by deliberately murdering their neighbours; and thus the quarrel would finally be settled. Our road was rough and our fare coarse, but we had occasion for gratitude that we were kept in safety.

Amâdieh is pleasantly situated in an extensive opening or undulating plain between the mountains. The district is fertile in grain and fruit. The wheat is good and abundant, and the grapes are among the finest I have seen. The raisins made from them are an article of export, and are celebrated as the best brought into Persia. The climate is deemed insalubrious, and successive wars have made sad havoc among the unfortunate population, who greatly need a good and stable government.

The town, or, more properly, the fortress of Amâdieh, is situated on the level summit of a very precipitous mountain or mass of rock, which rises, as I judged, nearly a thousand feet above the plain, and, being entirely insulated and distant from the surrounding mountains, it is regarded as quite impregnable. I ascended by a circuitous and difficult footpath, and entered the town at two o'clock P.M., October 12th, after answering the challenge of the heavy-armed soldiers who kept the gate. The town is garrisoned by Turk-

ish soldiers, whose commanding officer is made immediately responsible to the pasha of M<sup>o</sup>sul. The Koordish chief of the province of Am<sup>a</sup>di<sup>e</sup>h has no access to the fortress. This is an important precautionary measure on the part of the Turks, who, by demolishing the castle at Akra, and placing a foreign garrison in this more important fortress in the centre of the district, have completely put it out of the power of the Koords to throw off the Turkish yoke, unless under some special turn of fortune.

This will prove a great advantage to our prospective labours among the Mountain Nestorians; for, so long as there is a responsible control exercised over the Koords by the Turkish government, the way to the independent Nestorian Christians beyond is entirely open; and hence I cannot but regard the changes that have taken place here as peculiarly favourable to the prospect of extending our labours into that interesting field.

The town I found almost depopulated by wars consequent on the invasion of the Ravendoos Koords; and of 1000 houses, only two hundred and fifty are inhabited. Most of the remaining three fourths, and a part of the public markets, have been torn down or much dilapidated, and are now the noisome receptacles of filth and ordure. This general scene of desolation was not a little heightened by the sallow visages of the few re-

maining inmates, and of the soldiery, who were suffering severely from intermittent fevers and other bilious affections ; not, as they affirmed, entirely the effect of bad water, but rather, as appeared to me more probable, of the filthy and ruinous state of the town. I found the civil governor and the military commander both seriously ill, and to them my visit was most welcome.

I spent a quiet Sabbath at Amâdieh, having given previous notice that I would attend to the sick on Monday morning. There are about one hundred families of Jews in the place, who cannot be distinguished by their appearance or language from the Nestorians ; and so complete was the deception, that my Nestorian attendants began to chide some of them for working on Sunday, supposing them to be of their own people ; until, after considerable conversation, we were informed that they were not Christians, but Jews. There are little more than a hundred Nestorians in the town, as most of this people live in the surrounding villages. More than half of them have become papists (Chaldeans), and there are not now more than two or three thousand Nestorians in this district ; but they are more numerous in the adjoining district of Berwer, bordering on the river Habor (Khaboor) on the north.

This river rises near Jûlamerk, and flows within about ten hours' walk of this place, while the

waters of the Zâb are visible from the ramparts of the fortress about ten miles to the east. This is very different from what is represented even in our best maps, and I found other geographical errors quite as great. I also discovered that the greater Zâb and Hakary rivers are one stream instead of two, as put down on our maps.\* Such errors, though very remarkable, are not so surprising as they otherwise would be, when we consider that no foreigner had ever before explored the country into which I was now entering.

Monday was spent in attendance upon the sick, in general intercourse with the people, and preparations for the continuance of my journey. I gave medicine to forty or fifty of the soldiers, and received the warmest thanks of the governor, who

\* The following notice of this discovery is from the pen of Colonel Sheil, her Britannic majesty's chargé d'affaires at the court of Persia, to whom I am indebted for the kindest aid in the prosecution of my tour.

"I have taken the liberty to send your letter to the secretary of the Geographical Society in England, which I trust will not be disagreeable to you. It appeared to me desirable that you should bring to the notice of that body that you had established two facts which they felt an anxiety to ascertain: I mean, the identity of the greater Zâb and Hakary rivers; and whether the Bitlis-Soo and Khaboor were different rivers. M'Donald Kinneir asserts that the Bitlis-Soo is the same as the Khaboor, while Rich states that the former falls into the Tigris not far from Sert, and that the latter rises north of Amâdieh. You have proved that Rich was in the right."

This discovery has since been published in the *Literary Magazine* in London, and in other English periodicals.

made me his guest. He said it was God who had sent me for their relief, when they had neither physician to prescribe nor medicine to alleviate their sufferings.

The Nestorian priest lamented the low state to which their Church had been reduced, and said he feared that the people, in their gross ignorance, would fall a sacrifice to the wiles of the papists; who, he had been told, were about to make more vigorous efforts than ever to convert the whole of his people to Romanism. He told a sad tale of their past efforts and success, stating that his own father was bastinadoed to compel him to become a Roman Catholic!

The papists in Mesopotamia have assured me that no effort will be spared to convert the whole of the Nestorian Church to their faith; and this report is confirmed by letters since received from Bagdad, one of which says that three bishops and priests, educated at the Propaganda, were "about going to M<sup>o</sup>sul to hold a convention to devise measures to bring over all the Nestorians to the Romish faith!" There must be a final struggle with "the man of sin," and it must be boldly and promptly met. With God and truth on our side, we have nothing to fear, if the Church will come up to her duty. The Nestorians have nobly stood their ground, and they are still upon the watch-tower. As I approached their mount-



ain fastnesses, their first inquiry was to know whether I was a " *Catoleek* ;" declaring that they would not permit these " wolves in sheep's clothing" to enter their country. Hitherto they have prevented the emissaries of Rome from entering their mountains. But the latter are looking with eagerness to this interesting field ; and, while they are extending their labours in the East, no effort will be spared to spread their influence among the mountain tribes. Will Protestant Christians, to whom the Nestorians are stretching out their hands for help, suffer the golden harvest to fall into the garner of the pope ?

## CHAPTER V.

Arrival at Dûree.—Intercourse with the Nestorian Bishop.—View from the Mountains.—Arrival among the Independent Tribes.—Remarkable Incident—Kind Reception.

*Oct. 15.*—I PROCEEDED at an early hour towards the borders of the independent Nestorian country. Their nearest villages are about twelve hours distant; but some of their men cultivate a portion of the border district of Dûree, where one of their bishops resides, about six or seven hours from Amâdieh. I engaged mules to this place, but they could not be brought to the town, lest the government officers should seize them for their own use, without making any remuneration for their services. I therefore descended from the fortress on foot. The priest kindly sent his brother to introduce me to the bishop at Dûree, and I found his presence important.

My Koordish cavass from the chief at Akra was still with me; but he was very reluctant to proceed, lest he should fall into the hands of some of the independent Nestorians, who are represented as a most formidable race of people. The most extravagant stories are told of them, and it is said that, when any of them come to Amâdieh to trade,

they are not allowed to remain in the town over night, lest they should obtain possession of the fortress. They are regarded as almost invincible, and are represented as having the power of vanquishing their enemies by some magical spell in their looks. On one occasion they came and drove away the flocks of the Koords from under the very walls of Amâdieh, in return for some aggression upon themselves. And when the Ravendoos Koords, after subduing all the surrounding region, threatened their country, the Nestorians are said to have seized six or seven of the Koords, cut off their heads, and hung them up over a narrow bridge which led to their district, as a warning to the Koords who might attempt to invade them. That such stories are told and believed by their Moslem neighbours is sufficient evidence of the terror inspired by their name.

“To the borders of their country,” said the vigorous pasha of Môsul, “I will be responsible for your safety; you may put gold upon your head, and you will have nothing to fear; but I warn you that I can protect you no farther. Those mountain infidels (Christians) acknowledge neither pashas nor kings, but from time immemorial every man has been his own king!” To the borders of their country I therefore required the attendance of the cavass as a protection against the Koords, and we set out through a bold rocky de-

file over the wild mountains on our north and northeast.

As we approached the village of Dûree, after a toilsome ride of seven hours over the rough mountain passes, we were halted by several of the Mountain Nestorians from the independent district of Tiyâry, who demanded who we were, what we wanted, whither going, &c. ; and the demand was repeated by each successive party we passed, till finally the cry seemed to issue from the very rocks over our head, "Who are you ? whence do you come ? what do you want ?" A cry so often repeated in the deep Syriac gutturals of their stentorian voices, was not a little startling : and then their bold bearing, and a certain fierceness of expression, and spirited action and intonation of voice, with the scrutinizing inquiry whether we were Catholics or bad men whom they might rob (as one inquired of our Nestorian guide) bereft my poor cavass of the little courage that had sustained him thus far ; and he manifested so much real alarm that I yielded to his earnest request, and dismissed him as soon as we reached the house of the bishop, who assured me that his presence was no longer desirable.

The people soon satisfied themselves of my character and friendly intentions, and, finding that I spoke their language, seemed to regard me as one of their own people, and gathered around me

in the most friendly manner, but without that familiar sycophancy so common among the Christian subjects of Persian and Turkish dominion. The next day they came from all directions for medical aid. One man became quite alarmed at being made so sick by an emetic ; but, when it was over, such was his relief that he wanted some more of the same medicine ; and others, instead of asking me to prescribe for them, often asked for "*derman d'mortha*," or medicine for bile.

The bishop, who is a most patriarchal personage, with a long white beard, was very cordial, and took me into his venerable church, a very ancient structure, made by enlarging a natural cave by means of heavy stone walls in front of the precipitous rock. It stood far up on the side of the mountain, and within, it was dark as midnight.

The attentive old bishop took my hand and guided it to a plain stone cross which lay upon the altar, supposing I would manifest my veneration or devotional feelings after their own custom by pressing it to my lips. I must confess that there is something affecting in this simple outward expression as practised by the Nestorians, who mingle with it none of the image worship, or the other corrupt observances of the Roman Catholic Church. May it not be that the abuse of such symbols by the votaries of the Roman see has carried us Protestants to the other extreme, when we

utterly condemn the simple memento of the cross ? The old bishop sleeps in his solitary church, so as to be in readiness to attend his devotions before daylight in the morning ; and he was much gratified by the present of a box of loco foco's which I gave him to ignite his lamp. A number of beehives, the property of the Church, were kept here, and the honey from them was regarded as peculiarly valuable. It was certainly very fine. Red squirrels were skipping among the black walnut-trees ; the first of the squirrel tribe I had seen in the East.

Iron mines, under the control of the Koordish chief, are wrought by the Nestorians near this place, and lead mines are numerous in the Nestorian country beyond.

Dûree is nominally subject to the Turkish government, and immediately responsible to the Koordish chief of Berwer, a sub-chief of Amâdieh.

A high range of mountains still separated me from the proper country of the independent Nestorians. At Mûsul I was strongly advised not to venture into their country until I should send, and obtain an escort from the patriarch ; but, after mature consideration and free consultation with the bishop, I resolved to proceed at once ; for by this course I might gain the good-will of the Nestorians from the confidence I evinced in them, and also save eight or ten days' delay ; a consideration of some importance on the eve of winter among

these lofty mountains. The bishop volunteered to send an intelligent young Nestorian with me, and two others went to bring back the mules from Lezân, which is the first village of the independent tribe of Tiyâry, the nearest and by far the most powerful of the mountain tribes.

To enable me to secure a footing where, as I was told, I could neither ride on my mule nor walk with shoes, so precipitous was the mountain, I exchanged my wide Turkish boots for the bishop's sandals. These were wrought with hair cord in such a manner as to defend the sole of the foot, and enable the wearer to secure a foothold where he might, without such protection, be hurled down the almost perpendicular mountain sides.

Thus equipped in native style, I set off on the 18th, at an early hour in the morning ; and, after a toilsome ascent of an hour and a half, I found myself at the summit of the mountain, where a scene indescribably grand was spread out before me. The country of the independent Nestorians opened before my enraptured vision like a vast amphitheatre of wild, precipitous mountains, broken with deep, dark-looking defiles and narrow glens, into few of which the eye could penetrate so far as to gain a distinct view of the cheerful, smiling villages which have long been the secure abodes of the main body of the Nestorian Church.

Here was the home of a hundred thousand Christians, around whom the arm of Omnipotence had reared the adamantine ramparts whose lofty, snow-capped summits seemed to blend with the skies in the distant horizon. Here, in their munition of rocks, has God preserved, as if for some great end in the economy of his grace, a chosen remnant of his ancient Church, secure from the beast and the false prophet, safe from the flames of persecution and the clangour of war. As I gazed and wondered, I seemed as if standing on Pisgah's top, and I could with a full heart exclaim,

“ On the mountain's top appearing,  
Lo the sacred herald stands ;  
Welcome news to Zion bearing,  
Zion long in hostile lands !  
Mourning captive !  
God himself shall loose thy bands.”

I retired to a sequestered pinnacle of rock, where I could feast my vision with the sublime spectacle, and pour out my heartfelt gratitude that I had been brought at length, through many perils, to behold a country from which emanated the brightest beams of hope for the long-benighted empire of Mohammedan delusion, by whose millions of votaries I was surrounded on every side. My thoughts went back to the days when their missionaries were spread abroad throughout the East, and for more than a thousand years continued to plant and sustain the standard of the cross



through the remote and barbarous countries of Central Asia, Tartary, Mongolia, and China; to the time when, as tradition and history alike testify, the gospel standard was reared in these mountains by apostles' hands; for it was not from Nestorius, but from Thomas, Bartholemew, Thaddeus, and others that this people first received the knowledge of a Saviour, as will be seen in the sequel.

I looked at them in their present state, sunk down into the ignorance of semi-barbarism, and the light of vital piety almost extinguished upon their altars, and my heart bled for their condition. But hope pointed her radiant wand to brighter scenes, when all these glens, and rocks, and vales shall echo and re-echo to the glad praises of our God; and, like a morning star, these Nestorians shall arise to usher in a glorious and resplendent day. But, ere that bright period shall arrive, there is a mighty work to be done—a conflict with the powers of darkness before the shout of victory. Let us arm this brave band for the contest.

Onward to the work! and onward I sped my course down the steep declivity of the mountain, now cautiously climbing over the rocks which obstructed our course, now resting my weary limbs under the inviting shade of a wild pear-tree, and anon, mounted on my hardy mule, winding along our narrow zigzag pathway over the mountain spurs, and down, far down to the banks of the

rolling, noisy, dashing Zab. Here lay one of the large, populous villages of the independent Nestorians, which extended amid fertile gardens for more than a mile in length.

What reception shall I meet from these wild sons of the mountain, who have never seen the face of a foreigner before? How will they regard the helpless stranger thrown so entirely upon their mercy? One breath of suspicion might blast my fondest hopes. But God was smiling upon the work in which I was engaged; prayer had been heard, and the way was prepared before me in a manner so wonderful that I can hardly forbear repeating the account, though already made public.

The only person I had ever seen from this remote tribe was a young Nestorian, who came to me about a year before, entirely blind. He said he had never expected to see the light of day, till my name had reached his country, and he had been told that I could restore his sight. With wonderful perseverance, he had gone from village to village seeking some one to lead him by the hand, till, in the course of five or six weeks, he had reached my residence at Ooroomiah, where I removed the cataract from his eyes, and he returned to his mountains seeing. Scarcely had I entered the first village in his country when this young man, hearing of my approach, came with

a smiling countenance, bearing in his hand a present of honey, in token of his gratitude for the restoration of his sight, and affording me an introduction to the confidence and affections of his people.

I was invited to the residence of the chief man of the village, whose house was built, after the common style of the country, of stone laid in mud, with flat terrace roof; having a basement and second story, with two or three apartments in each. We were seated upon the floor in "a large upper room," which serves as the guest-chamber and the family room in summer, but is too open to be comfortable in winter. Food was placed before us in a very large wooden bowl, placed upon the skin of a wild goat or ibex, which was spread upon the carpet with the hair side down, and served as a table and cloth. Bread made of millet, baked in the manner of the Virginia hoecake, but not so palatable, was laid round the edge of our goatskin table, and a large wooden spoon provided for each one of the party, eight or ten in number, to help himself out of the common dish. The people here less generally eat with their fingers than do those of Persia.

Whenever the goatskin was brought forward, I noticed that it contained the fragments of bread left at the previous meals, and was told, on inquiry, that this singular custom was observed in obedi-

ence to our Saviour's injunction, "Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost," and also that they might retain the blessing which had been pronounced by a priest upon former repasts; because the service, being in the ancient language, is only intelligible to the clergy, and cannot be properly performed by the laity.

The women did not eat with the men, but, instead of receiving what they left, as is very common in the East, a separate portion was reserved for the females, and, in all respects, they were treated with more consideration, and regarded more as companions than in most Asiatic countries.

Till evening they were constantly occupied in their various employments, within or out of the house, and in many respects remarkably exemplified Solomon's description of a virtuous woman, even in their method of spinning (Prov., xxxi., 19), literally holding their distaffs in their hands, while they give their long wooden spindles a twirl with the other hand, and then lay hold of it to wind up their thread; for they use no wheel. They clothe their household in scarlet or striped cloth, made of wool and resembling Scotch tartan, of a beautiful and substantial texture.

The women appear to be neat, industrious, and frugal, and they are remarkably chaste, without the false affectation of modesty too often seen in these countries. Two of the young married wom-

on in the house came forward in the evening, and, in the presence of their husbands, joined in our social visit. Each of them, at my request, gave me a brass ring from her wrist to show to our American ladies, regarding whose customs they made many inquiries. Like others of their people, they were the most surprised that our ladies should negotiate their own matrimonial engagements, and that their fathers should give them in marriage without receiving a dowry in payment for their daughters. Their dress is neat and becoming; they braid their hair, and wear but few ornaments. Their form is graceful, their expression agreeable, and their complexion (except that it is sometimes affected by more exposure to the sun and the smoke of their dwellings) as fair as that of most Europeans.

Grapes, figs, and pomegranates I found among their fruits in the lower villages on the river, where rice is also cultivated, to the great detriment of health. Apples and other Northern fruits are found in the higher villages. Wheat is little cultivated for want of space, but it is brought from Amâdîch in exchange for honey and butter.

## CHAPTER VI

Nestorians.—Churches.—Worship.—Sabbath.—A Tale.—Preservation of the Scriptures.—Strife with the Koords.—Pastoral Life.—Resources.—Character.—Females.

“The sound of the church-going bell,  
These valleys and rocks never heard.”

*Oct. 20.*—**SABBATH.** A thin piece of board was struck rapidly with a mallet, to call the villagers to church at the rising of the sun. Each person, on entering the church, put off his shoes, and testified his reverence for the sanctuary of God by kissing the doorposts or threshold, and passed on to kiss the Gospels lying upon the altar, then the cross, and finally the hand of his religious teacher.

The church, like all I saw in the mountains, was a very solid stone edifice, with arched roof, and might stand for ages. Others that I saw had stood for more than fourteen centuries, according to their ancient records. For the narrow door (which would not admit a man without much stooping) the usual explanation was given, “Strait is the gate,” &c., a truth of which they wished to be reminded when entering the sanctuary. The prayers and the singing or chanting of the psalms were all in the ancient Syriac language, and quite unintelligible to the common people; but one of the

priests read a portion of the Gospels, and gave the translation into the vulgar Syriac spoken by the Nestorians; and this constituted the preaching. Sometimes the reading is accompanied by some explanations or legendary stories, of which they have many.

It was a sacramental occasion; and the bread and wine were consecrated in the sanctuary or "holy place" of the church, and then brought out by a priest and a deacon, while each member of the church went forward in rotation, and partook of a small piece of the bread from the hand of the priest, who held a napkin to prevent any particles from falling, as he put the morsel into the mouth of the communicant; and then he drank of the wine, which was held with great care by the deacon, so that not a drop should be spilled. But there was none of that idolatrous adoration of the host, so characteristic of the mass of the Romanists and of the other Oriental churches. On the contrary, there was almost a scriptural simplicity in the observance of this solemn ordinance.

The priest who had officiated in the prayers and instruction of the congregation first partook of the sacred elements, and then invited me to partake. Hitherto I had never partaken of this ordinance with the Nestorians; but to have declined under present circumstances would have done as much injustice to my own feelings as to theirs. For

many months I had not been privileged with coming to the table of the Lord: God had in great mercy preserved me through many perils, and brought me among a people who had received the gospel from the apostles and immediate disciples of our Saviour, and had preserved its doctrines with a great degree of purity; and though there was painful evidence of a great want of spiritual life, I was encouraged to hope that some almost smothered sparks of vital piety were still burning upon these altars. I could not but regard it as a branch of the true Church of God, though immersed in the darkness of gross ignorance, superstition, and spiritual torpor, yet not of death. But there was still much in their character and circumstances of deep and lively interest; my heart was drawn out towards them in warm affection; and seldom have I commemorated the dying love of Christ under circumstances more deeply interesting, than among these primitive Christians, in the wild mountains of ancient Assyria.

There was great stillness and propriety of deportment in the congregation, and all retired without noise or confusion. In passing out, each person received at the door a very thin leaf of bread, rolled together, and enclosing a morsel of meat. This was the "love feast" of the early Christians of the first and second centuries.\*

\* Mosheim's *Eccles. Hist.*, vol. i., p. 54.



Several of the people then went to the house of the church steward, and partook of a more substantial but plain repast, retiring soon after to their houses or calling upon their more immediate friends. The day was observed with far more propriety than I have seen among other Christians of the East. There was a general stillness throughout the village, such as I have noticed in few places in more highly-favoured lands. There was no noisy merriment, no attention to secular business; and the social intercourse of the people was nothing more than what was practised in the ancient Hebrew Church. Formerly they are said to have regarded the Christian Sabbath with so much sacredness, as to put to death persons for travelling on that holy day.

In the evening many of the people again assembled for worship at the church, and morning and evening prayers are offered there through the whole week. But, unlike what I have seen anywhere else in the East, many of the people say their prayers in their own dwellings, instead of going to the church during the week; and a small wooden cross may be seen hanging from a post for them to kiss before prayers; a practice which they regard as a simple expression of love to Christ, and faith in his death and atonement. The cross, however, is not considered in any sense as an object of religious worship.

Oct. 21.—At dawn of day the people came in great numbers for medical aid, and I soon became so thronged by them that I was obliged to stop my prescriptions till they should retire to a distance, allowing no more than three or four to come forward at once. Many of the applicants came from other villages. There were many suffering from bilious affections, intermittent fever, etc., the consequence of the rice-fields and extensive irrigation of the gardens in the village, together with the great heat of summer, which must become oppressive from the concentration of the sun's rays in these narrow vales. The mountains rise so abruptly that most of the soil is prepared for cultivation by forming artificial terraces. These are supported by a stone wall on the lower side, while one terrace rises above another, and the houses are dispersed among the gardens.

At a short distance from Ezán, a precipice is pointed out, where the people say their forefathers, before the Christian era, were in the practice of carrying up their aged and helpless parents, and throwing them down the mountain to relieve themselves of the burden of their support. At length the following incident put an end to the horrid practice: A young man, who was carrying his aged father up the precipitous mountain, became exhausted, and put down his burden to rest; when the old man began to weep, and said to his son,

“It is not for myself, but for you that I weep. I well remember the time when I carried my father up this same mountain; but I little thought then that my turn would come so soon. I weep, my son, to think that you too may soon be dashed down that dreadful precipice, as you are about to throw me.” This speech melted the son’s heart: he carried back his venerable father, and maintained him at his own home. The story was told to others; it led to reflection, and from that time the practice ceased. This may serve as a specimen of the fables of the country, if it be no more than a fable.

It was about ten o’clock before I could prescribe for the numerous applicants for medical aid, though I had most of my medicines folded in separate portions, so that I could deal them out with great facility. I then proceeded up a creek which here empties into the Zâb, and before night arrived at the village of Asheetha (or avalanche); so called from the circumstance that avalanches are remarkably frequent here. The remains of some of them were still to be seen in the ravines just above the village, from which it is said they never disappear.

We travelled for four or five miles through an almost continuous village, from which the people often came out to salute us or ask for medicine. At one village of about one hundred houses, on the side of the mountain, there were said to be no less

than forty men who could read, which was regarded as a remarkably large proportion for a population of a thousand or more souls! Probably but a small part of them can read intelligibly the ancient Syriac, their only written language.

At Asheetha I became the guest of priest Auraham (Abraham), who is reputed the most learned Nestorian now living. He has spent twenty years of his life in writing and reading books, and has thus done much to supply the waste of, if not to replenish, the Nestorian literature. But even he had not an entire Bible; and though the Nestorians have preserved the Scriptures in manuscript with great care and purity, so scarce are the copies, that I have not found but a single Nestorian, and that one the patriarch, their spiritual head, who possessed an entire Bible; and even that was in half a dozen different volumes. Thus divided, one man has the Gospels, another the Epistles, the Psalms, the Pentateuch, or the Prophets. Portions of the Scriptures are also contained in their church liturgy or ritual. The book of Revelation, and two or three of the shorter epistles, they did not possess till furnished with them by our mission; and these portions of the Bible appear not to have reached them when their canon was made up. But they readily received them upon the testimony of other Christian nations, and the internal evidence of their authenticity.

The Nestorians attach the greatest value to the Scriptures, and are desirous to have them multiplied among their people, in a language which all understand; and when I told priest Abraham of the power of the press to multiply books, his keen, expressive eye was lighted up with a new brilliancy, and he manifested a strong desire to see it in operation here.

Seeing me taking the catalogue of his small library, he begged me to write down his application for the Scriptures he had requested; and others, following his example, said, "Write down my name:" "Write my name, that I may have the Gospels too;" referring to the four Gospels in the ancient Syriac, which is the only portion of the Bible printed in the Nestorian character.

This priest may yet prove an efficient aid in our future efforts for the improvement of his people. His twenty years' toil, in copying the few works of the Nestorian literature, are beyond all commendation, when we think how small was his encouragement, and that he stood almost alone in the work. No wonder that he was deeply animated, or, I might rather say, almost electrified at the prospect of seeing a power in operation which could do his twenty years' work in a less number of days, and at a far less expense than what he had paid for his paper and parchment. His style of writing with the reed was truly beautiful, and

the glossy lustre such as can scarcely be equalled by type. He was very desirous to see schools established for the education of his people; and said that great numbers would attend, if we would open a school in the village.

The people here say they can bring a thousand armed men into the field; and, estimating them as one to five of the whole population, this would give five thousand souls to this single village, the largest in the mountains. About half of the people spend the summer with their flocks upon the mountains, living under tabernacles of reeds and bushes, or in tents; while the remainder cultivate their gardens and follow other employments at home. In these villages, where the whole population remains through the winter, the people dwell in entire security; but they are sometimes brought into collision with their Koordish neighbours while pasturing their flocks in their immediate neighbourhood. Such was recently the case with the Nestorians of this village.

While they were pasturing their flocks on one bank of the Habor, a powerful tribe of Koords from the other side surprised them in the night, and drove away about 5000 of their sheep. The Nestorians then took possession of a pass, that led to the winter-quarters of the Koords. The latter, finding themselves shut in where they could not long find subsistence, sent to the head chief of the

Hakary tribes of Koords to ask his interference ; and this chief sent a liberal present to the patriarch, hoping in this way to induce the Nestorians to relinquish their advantage. To prevent open hostilities and keep on good terms with the Hakary chief, the patriarch acceded to the proposition, but intimated to his people here that they might obtain redress at another time. Consequently, the Nestorians suffered the Koords to return to their winter-quarters, taking their booty with them, and the Nestorians came back to their village. Thus stood the case when I visited them ; but, while I was at the patriarch's, I learned that the Nestorians made an incursion into the villages of these Koords, and drove away about 4000 sheep, with mules and other property, enough to make up their loss with interest ; and thus the matter ended ; while the Koords were taught a lesson which will add to their tales of the invincible prowess of the Mountain Nestorians.

*Oct. 22.*—Travelled about eight hours to Chumba, on the river Zâb ; course east-northeast over the mountains. The first range was passed without dismounting from our mules ; but the second was very steep and lofty, and occasioned me a long and toilsome walk. Upon the summit, we passed some of the summer pasture-grounds of the Nestorians ; where those who attend the flocks live in a pure, invigorating atmosphere, and drink from the

crystal streams perpetually cooled by the melting snows, of which large banks, the remains of avalanches, still occupied the deep ravines; while the surrounding heights were glistening in their fresh winter apparel. The inhabitants of each village have their separate pastures, and live in harmony with each other, seeming to regard their sojourn upon the mountain heights as the pleasantest portion of their life. But few of the people spend the summer in the lowest villages along the Zâb, on account of the heat, insects, and fevers. Those who remain sleep on high scaffolds, to avoid the moschetoës and sandflies.

But, with all the romance of their pastoral scenes and primitive patriarchal habits, it may require no ordinary share of self-denying devotedness to the cause of Christ, and of love to this dear neglected flock, to enable the missionary to exchange the convenience of civilized life for a canopy of bushes or canvass, a seat upon the earth, and the thousand nameless privations of a nomadic life. Experience alone can determine how far such a mode of life will be required of the missionaries in these mountainous regions; but, while the permanent stations will be in the larger villages of the valleys, both health and usefulness will no doubt require their occasional removal with the Nestorians to their *Zozan* or pastures upon the mountain heights, and beside the still waters in



the higher valleys. It is such a life as the sweet psalmist of Israel often led ; and why may it not now conduce, as then, to holy contemplation and converse with nature's God ; and a spirit of fervid, exalted piety breathe through the bosoms of these dwellers upon the mountains ?

At the foot of the first range I passed a furnace, where the Nestorians were making lead from the ore, which they find in great abundance in their mines in different parts of the mountains. They also make their own powder, and never depend upon foreign resources for their ammunition. Sulphur is found in the mountains near Jûlamerk, and the people make their own nitre ; and generally each man makes his own powder and balls, and also his hats and shoes. Their wants are few, compared with those of a more artificial state of society, and these they supply by industry, perseverance and frugality, with very little resort to foreign sources. On the whole, they are the most independent people I ever saw, in every respect.

My feet and limbs almost failed me before I reached the foot of the main range. We continued our journey on foot along a narrow foot-path, cut out of the perpendicular face of the overhanging rock ; leaving my mule to follow on as fast as he could climb over the fragments, which it appeared impossible for him to pass. He finally got into the mountain torrent and wet my luggage

(but fortunately without injury to my medicines, the most valuable part of my effects), while we passed over upon a long, bare pole, that answered the purpose of a bridge.

The whole scene was one of the most wild and romantic that imagination could picture; and soon it became clothed in awful sublimity by the lightning's vivid flash and the roaring thunder, whose almost deafening peals reverberated through the rocks and glens in fearful echoes.

We hastened on, and reached our destined village, in a beautiful ravine on the banks of the river Zâb, as the shades of evening began to gather around us. Scarcely had I got comfortably lodged in the spacious guest-chamber of the hospitable *malek*, when the clouds began to pour down torrents of rain, which continued through the night, and a part of the next day and night.

My host, as his title signifies, is the prince of a tribe, or a division of the large tribe of the Tiyâry Nestorians; and by virtue of his office has an important influence among his people, though his office is rather advisory or paternal, than judicial or mandatory. The supreme civil, as well as ecclesiastical authority over the independent tribes, is vested in the patriarch; who holds nearly the same relation to his people in these respects that the high-priest did among the ancient Hebrews, and their government bears a striking analogy to

that primitive theocracy. The assembly of elders still convenes, but without much formality; and the avenger of blood still executes justice in capital offences, while the offender may find all the advantages of the ancient cities of refuge in their venerable churches. Excision, not only from the privileges of the church, but even from society, is a common form of severe punishment inflicted by the patriarch; and his ban is greatly dreaded by the people. A man of high influence, living near the river on the more direct road from Lezân, is now resting under such a malediction; in consequence of which the people hold very little intercourse with him; for this reason I was desired to take the more circuitous route by way of Asheetha.

I observed that property was left much more exposed than is common in the East; a circumstance which evinces the truth of the report that the people confide in each other's general integrity, while they have no fear of thieves from other quarters. As I noticed the fact that the houses were built at a distance of some rods from each other, while most Eastern villages are very compact, the same explanation was given: we have no thieves here. This, however, can only be comparatively true; though there is a high sense of honour, which forms a better safeguard, in many cases, than all the sanguinary punishments of the Turks and Persians. For instance, when any one finds a lost article, he

gives notice of the fact, retaining the article until the owner comes for it, however long the interval.

Cases are related of very unhappy results from the high sense of honour entertained by this people, one of which occurred in the family of my host some years since, and occasioned the death of two promising lads. One of these boys went out to cut down a valuable tree, in the absence of the parents of both, who were brothers. His cousin forbade him, saying the tree belonged to his own father. But the first boy persevered, while the other went and brought out his gun, and deliberately shot his cousin dead upon the spot. An indelible stain would now rest upon the family of the murdered boy, unless vengeance was satisfied according to immemorial usage; and the bereaved father, who was the legal avenger of blood, could accept of nothing but the blood of his brother's child, and they were both buried in one grave before the setting of another sun!

Another instance is said to have occurred at a social party, where, with less of formality than is used by some of our "men of honour;" a person, in exchange for some supposed insult, plunged his large dagger, such as every one wears at his side, into the breast of another; upon which the brother of the slain, the legal "avenger of blood," closed the tragical scene by laying the murderer dead at his feet. But such cases must be of very uncom-

mon occurrence, and they are related as such by the people. The summary manner of the punishment no doubt deters from crime, since the criminal has little chance of escaping justice.

I found my host a very intelligent man for a person in his circumstances ; but it is quite evident that a people so much shut out from the world can have but a very imperfect and confused notion of what is going on in other countries. He had heard of steamboats and balloons, and wished to know if it were true that the English had ships which could sail under water, or which they could render invisible to their enemies, as he had heard. I was much pleased with his desire for information ; and hope we may soon be able to respond to the call which continues to be made for books and schools, for the Bible, and the ability to read it. They want food for the mind.

The priest of the village often visited us, and expressed a lively interest in our plans and efforts for the improvement of his people. He was trying to live a very holy life, and had therefore taken a vow corresponding to that of the Nazarites among the Jews. He ate no meat or animal food of any kind, not even vegetable oils or milk ; so that he might feed his soul by starving the body. Such instances are, however, very uncommon ; but as celibacy is a part of the vow, it seems to have superseded the few convents which once existed

among this people. Vows of celibacy among the females are known to exist, but the cases are very rare; and nunneries are quite unknown.

*Oct. 23.*—I found myself pleasantly employed in prescribing for the sick, and in general social and religious intercourse with the people. The situation of the village is romantic and agreeable; but it is not of the largest class, though there were others not far distant; so that we were not wanting for society. We still sat and slept on the floor, or rather upon the coarse felt carpets laid on the earthen floor, and ate our plain fare from one large wooden bowl, with wooden spoons and with our fingers.

The women were social, and treated us with all kindness. The former wife of my host was a sister of the patriarch, and a rare example of female education; the only one of her day, I believe, among the Nestorians. She is said to have been a superior woman, and to have exerted a very salutary influence among her people. It is encouraging to see such respect paid to the educated of this too long degraded sex among the Nestorians. A younger sister of the patriarch has followed the example, and she is the only female among the mountain Nestorians who can read her Bible; while among those of the plain not one could read previously to the commencement of our system of instruction. Let them become as intelligent and

pious, as they are frugal, active, and virtuous, and they will soon rise to influence, and be a blessing and an ornament to their sex in these benighted lands.

Nature has been bountiful to them, and their minds are susceptible of the highest culture. They would not suffer in comparison with any other people. Their children are bright and active; but they are suffered to grow up without control. Their affection for their relatives is strong, and they have a warm attachment to the family circle. But the example of a well-regulated Christian household is greatly needed; and the female missionary would here find a field of the greatest promise. She might exert an influence such as no one else could acquire; and, however self-denying her station, might enjoy, in the fruits of her toil, a more exalted happiness than all earthly pleasures could impart.

## CHAPTER VII.

Mountain Bridges.—Defiles.—Medical Practice.—Roads.—Arrival at the Patriarch's.—Kind Reception.—Character of the Patriarch.—Social Intercourse.—Ruined Castle.—Female Fidelity.—Church Government.—Patriarch's Family.

*Oct. 24.*—ABOUT ten o'clock I left the hospitable dwelling of Malek Isma'il (Ishmael), who kindly sent a trusty servant to help me across the river. The bridge had been swept away, and a couple of long bare poles supplied its place; but, said my host, "Do not be afraid; get upon the back of my servant, and he will carry you safe over!" I preferred to trust my own feet, and succeeded in passing this and two similar bridges in safety, though they vibrated most fearfully. The mules could not pass, and much of the road I had now to traverse along the precipitous banks of the river was too difficult for them to travel. Consequently, I had no alternative but to walk, or take another road which led over the mountains to Jûlamerk, and, among the independent Koords, to whom I was unwilling to expose myself at present. Two of the hardy mountaineers accompanied me to carry my effects and medicines; and the young deacon who travelled with me from Dûree was still of my party. We were six in all; and a cheerful, happy party as ever traversed such



wild goat-paths as led us along the base of these rocky heights. Slight showers of rain fell at intervals, so that my hair sandals soon became soaked with water, and I travelled all day with my feet wet and chilled, but with a buoyant heart.

On either side the prospect was bounded by wild, rocky mountains, whose summits were fringed with the lowering clouds, above which the loftier snow-clad pinnacles raised their hoary heads, and sparkled in the rays of an Oriental sun. Here and there their sides were studded with clusters of trees, which aspire to the name of forests in these Eastern lands, where often, for days together, the traveller's eye is not greeted by a single tree. Below me the swollen river roared and dashed along over its rocky bed, which is often confined between the opposing faces of almost perpendicular rocks, that rise like gigantic battlements, and invite the passing stranger to stop and gaze upon the bold and varying scene.

Wherever the mountains recede from the river so as to admit of cultivation, smiling villages are seen imbosomed in verdant gardens and vineyards. But portions of the way the mountains are so steep as to shade the traveller from the noonday sun; and he almost involuntarily lays hold of the rocks to preserve his position while threading the more difficult passes along the mountain sides. The night of the twenty-fourth I spent

with the Nestorians of Bemeriga, where I obtained a pair of the hair sandals of the country in exchange for medicine, after the people had refused to sell them for money. Though my medical practice is entirely gratuitous, my expenses in travelling are often diminished by my professional services; and it was gratifying to find these mountaineers prizing them above their money.

The money most current here is a Turkish coin of ten or twelve cents' value, struck at Bagdad. Persian coin is rarely seen here, though current as far as Jûlamerk. This seems to denote that the trade has formerly been almost exclusively with Turkey.

On the evening of the twenty-fifth I arrived at Kermê, almost exhausted with a walk of ten long hours, and was soon recognised and welcomed as an old acquaintance by one of the Nestorians of the place.

I was not a little surprised when he mentioned that he had seen me at Ooroomiah, and received medicine and other relief at my hand when sick and destitute. It seems that he had come to me, more than two years before, with a disease from which I had very little hope of his recovery. Having learned that he had travelled a great distance, I sympathized with him in his misfortunes, gave him the best medicines and directions I could offer, and a small sum of money, with which he bought

some cheap and necessary clothing, and returned to his home in the mountains. From that time I had scarcely thought of my poor patient among the thousands who had come for relief. But the promise of God is sure: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days;" yes, and with an abundant increase. Not bread merely did I find, but everything to make me happy and comfortable in my long and weary wanderings!

Our entertainment was altogether exceedingly agreeable; but what gave to it the richest zest was my sense of the more than paternal kindness of God, in continually strewing my path with such rich and abounding mercies.

"What shall I render to my God,  
For all his kindness shown?"

*Oct. 26.*—Started for the patriarch's residence at eight in the morning. Descended to the river and forded it on a horse, the first I had seen since entering the Nestorian country in the mountains. The water was waist deep, and fifty or sixty yards across. We now found a better road than I had seen for a long time before; the rock having been cut away, and regular steps chiselled out in the more precipitous and difficult places, leaving, at intervals, the excavated rock hanging over our heads. It was the regular caravan road from Salmas in Persia to Júlamerk. In some places where

the path was supported from below by a wall of bad masonry, there was some danger that it might be knocked down in the passage of loaded caravans. But, upon the whole, the road was so far superior to what I had travelled for the past week, that I wondered how the governor of Salmas should have given it such a character as he did, in conversation with my friend Dr. Riach and myself. In his Oriental hyperbole, he told us that this part of the road to Jûlamerk was so frightful to travel, that a fat, spirited horse would, in a single day, suffer so much from terror, that before night he would become as thin as a knife blade! Caution is necessary to avoid meeting with horses in narrow parts of the road; and fatal accidents are said to have happened through neglect in this particular.

The patriarch, having heard of my approach, sent a horse, with some of his own men, to escort me to his dwelling, which stands far up on the mountain side. Our course continued about N.E., till we came in sight of his residence, when we recrossed the river on our right, at the mouth of a considerable creek which waters the district of Diss. A Koordish castle, the summer residence of Suleiman Bey, the second chief of the Hakary tribes, stands upon an eminence commanding this bridge, from which the mansion of the patriarch is distinctly visible, distant a little more than half a mile. A party of Koords who met us scrutinized

me very closely, but offered no molestation. From a distance, I could see the patriarch looking out of his chamber window with a small spyglass, to get a view of his strange visiter from the New World. According to their system of geography, the earth is a vast plain surrounded by the ocean, in which *leviathan* plays around to keep the water in motion, and prevent its becoming stagnant and putrid; and this leviathan is of such enormous length, that his head follows his tail in the circuit round the earth! That I had crossed the ocean where I must have encountered the monster was a thing almost incredible.

At half past twelve I found myself in the presence of the Patriarch of the East, the spiritual head of the Nestorian Church, who gave me a cordial welcome, but without that flow of heartless compliment and extravagant expression of pleasure which is so common in the mouth of a Persian. He said that he had been looking for a visit from some of our mission for a very long time, till he had begun to think we should never arrive; but, now that I had taken such a long and difficult journey to see him, he could not doubt that we would have given him the pleasure of an interview at an earlier day, but for an apprehension of the dangers to which I had alluded as the reason of our long delay. "And now," he added, "you are doubly welcome; my heart is rejoiced that I see

your face; and you will make my house your own, and regard me as your elder brother. It is a happy day for us both. May your journey be blessed."

The patriarch is thirty-eight years of age, above the middle stature, well proportioned, with a pleasant, expressive, and rather intelligent countenance; while his large flowing robes, his Koordish turban, and his long gray beard give him a patriarchal and venerable aspect, which is heightened by a uniformly dignified demeanour. Were it not for the youthful fire in his eye, and his vigour and activity, I should have thought him nearer fifty than thirty-eight. But his friends assured me that the hoariness of his beard and locks was that of care and not of age. His situation is certainly a difficult and responsible one, since he is, in an important sense, the temporal as well as the spiritual head of his people. To preserve harmony, and settle differences between the various tribes of his spirited mountaineers, and with the Koords by whom they are surrounded, is a labour that would tax the wisdom and patience of the greatest statesman; and I could hardly wonder that the hoar-frost of care was prematurely settling upon his locks. It was quite evident that the patriarch's anxiety extended not less to the temporal than to the spiritual wants of his flock; as his first inquiries related particularly to their political prospects, the movements in Turkey, the designs of the European powers

with regard to these countries; and why they did not come and break the arm of Mohammedan power, by which many of his people had been so long oppressed, and for fear of which the main body of them were shut up in their mountain fastnesses.

He is pacific in his disposition, and he carries his rifle in the anticipation of an encounter with the brown bear, the wolf, hyena, or wild boar of their mountains, rather than with the expectation of fighting their enemies the Koords. But, while the latter never enter the central parts of their country, they are sometimes brought into collision with them on their borders, as already noticed. Such had recently been the case in Tehoma and Jelu; and, during my visit at the patriarch's, he was called upon to decide what should be done with two Koords who had been taken by his people from a tribe that had some time before put two Nestorians to death. Blood for blood is still the law; and custom requires that a tribe be held accountable for the conduct of each of its members. Hence it mattered not whether the individuals they had taken were guilty of the murder; it was enough that they belonged to the same tribe, and by right they should die. The patriarch, however, was inclined to mercy, while his people, at the same time, must receive justice. After due deliberation and investigation of the case, the patriarch at length

decided that, inasmuch as his people had brought the captive Koords into their own houses, they had, in a sense, become their guests, and, consequently, their lives must be spared. But they might accept a ransom from the Koords; and thus the matter was finally settled.

During five weeks which I spent at the patriarchal mansion, I had an opportunity to see Nestorians of the greatest intelligence and influence from all parts of their mountain abodes, and to elicit from them such information as I had not an opportunity to collect in any other way. I endeavoured by every possible means to collect satisfactory statistical and other information, to which I shall have occasion to recur in other parts of this work. I also visited some of the villages and places of chief interest in the vicinity.

Calleh-d'-Seringa, an ancient castle, now in ruins, which I saw from a distance, is said to have been one of the outposts or strongholds of the Nestorians in their early contests with their Mohammedan foes. It was perched upon the summit of an insulated cone of rock, which rises to the height of several hundred feet, and is so very precipitous that it could only be ascended by means of iron pins driven into the rock. As it was said that these pins had mostly given place to wooden ones, I did not feel disposed to risk my neck by making the ascent. It stands in an opening near



the foot of Mount Derrik, which separates *Dis* from *Jelu*. This mountain is regarded as the highest land in these parts; and when I arrived at the patriarch's on the 26th of October, it was covered with such a mass of snow that mules could not cross it.

While snow remains in large quantities at all seasons in the ravines of the highest mountains, the summits of none in this vicinity are entirely covered through the whole year.

Among the multitude of invalids who were brought to me while I remained with the patriarch was a man from the neighbouring tribe of *Jelu*. While passing the mountains, his strength failed him, and he was likely to remain and perish in the snow. In this dilemma, his faithful wife took him upon her shoulders and carried him safely over the mountain summit! The women of that district are more accustomed than most others to perform the arduous labour of men, and they thus acquire their strength. So rocky and barren is their country, that many of the men are accustomed to spend a part of each year in making baskets or in other mechanical employments in the neighbouring Turkish provinces. Many from the adjacent tribe of *Bass* also spend their winters in a similar manner, returning to their homes in the spring. But the inhabitants of *Tiyâry* and the other independent tribes seldom leave their own mountain fastnesses.

Those Nestorians who live under the government of the Koords occasionally seek relief from rapine and oppression, and their consequent poverty, among their brethren of the plain. The heads of some of the Nestorian tribes collect a small sum as a present for the independent Hakary chief; but they profess to regard it only as a present, and they regulate their own civil affairs.

Their form of church government is essentially episcopal; but, with a single exception in the Jelu tribe, there is not a bishop among the independent Nestorians, where their religious forms have been preserved the most exempt from any foreign influence. It was a singular fact, to which my attention was first called by the testimony of Dr. Buchanan, that there is not a word in the Syriac language expressive of the office of bishop. The Nestorians, in common with the other Syrians, have borrowed the Greek term *episcopos*. This is the more remarkable, considering the fact that the Syriac language was extensively used in Palestine in the days of our Saviour, and was spoken by our Lord himself; and considering also the very early date of the Syriac version of the Scriptures, as early as the beginning of the second century. In every case where the term bishop occurs in our version, in theirs it is rendered presbyter or priest. I make these statements with the single remark that, while this form of church government may be the

best for the Nestorians in their circumstances, there is enough in the facts I have mentioned to caution us about too hasty an inference concerning the apostolic origin of episcopacy, on the ground that it exists in a church which was founded by the apostles.

Of the patriarch's official functions and many other particulars, I shall have occasion to speak in another place. His income is moderate, and he lives in a plain, patriarchal style. Two brothers, and a younger sister about twenty-two years of age, with five or six servants, male and female, comprise his household. As the patriarchs never marry, his domestic affairs were managed by his favourite sister, who supplied our table in the best and neatest style.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Departure from the Patriarch's.—Journey through the Mountains.—Visit to a Koordish Chief.—Scenes in the Castle.—Arrival at Ooroomiah.—Patriarch's Letter.—Return to the Mountains.—Visit to Júlamerk.

INSTEAD of retracing my long and weary route, I resolved, after much deliberation, to proceed through the country of the Hakary Koords, by way of Salmas, to Ooroomiah. This would require me to visit the Koordish chief who had put to death the unfortunate Shultz. If I could secure his confidence and favour, it would be an important acquisition in connexion with our missionary prospects among the mountain Nestorians, and perhaps open a safe channel of communication between them and the station at Ooroomiah. In anticipation of such a visit, I had provided myself with letters from the Turkish and Persian authorities. The patriarch also kindly offered to send one of his brothers to introduce me in person. Learning that Shultz had fallen a victim to the jealousy and cupidity of the Koords, I took special care not to awaken these dominant passions of a semi-barbarous people.

My scanty scrip contained little more than medicines, and these I hoped, in any event, to be able to retain. To provide for the contingency of lo-

sing my purse, I had secured some small gold coin in the centre of a roll of blister salve, I had no other articles which I was unwilling to expose. I visited none of their mines on my route; and, though passing through a most interesting geological region, I procured scarcely a single specimen, lest the ignorant Koords should suppose I had come to spy out their land with ulterior designs, as was intimated in the case of Shultz. I was also careful to avoid his habit of noting observations in public, and I took the bearings of my compass unobserved.

With such precautionary measures as these, I made my arrangements to proceed on my way. The parting scene was truly Oriental. The patriarch presented me with a pair of scarlet *shalwars*, the wide trousers of the country, trimmed with silk, and one of the ancient manuscripts of his library. It was the New Testament, written on parchment seven hundred and forty years ago, in the old Estrangelo character. His favourite sister Helena furnished us with a store of provisions sufficient for a week, and sent me a pair of warm mittens, made by her own hands from the soft goat's-hair of the country.

Finally, a thousand blessings were invoked upon my head, and ardent wishes were expressed that I might return with associates, and commence among these mountains a similar work to that in which

we were engaged upon the plain. Our last repast was finished, the parting embrace was given, and I set off towards the residence of Nooroolah Bey, the famous chief of the independent Hakary Koords. He had removed from his castle at Jû-lamerk, the capital, and was now living at the castle of Bash-Kalleh, nearly two days' journey from the residence of the patriarch.

A report that robbers were on the road occasioned some alarm as I pursued my way along the banks of the Zâb. But no robbers made their appearance; and I passed on without molestation to the strongly-fortified castle of the chief, which was distinctly visible, long before we reached it, from the mountain spur on which it rests.

Most unexpectedly I found the chief upon a sickbed. He had taken a violent cold about three days before my arrival, which had brought on inflammation and fever. I gave him medicine, and bled him, and then retired to my lodgings in the town, at the foot of the mountain on which the castle was built.

In the evening the chief sent down word that he was very sick, and he desired that I should do something to relieve him immediately. I sent him word by his messenger that he must have patience, and wait the effects of the medicines I had given him. About midnight the messenger came again, saying that the chief was still very ill, and wished

to see me. I obeyed the call promptly, following the long winding pathway that led up to the castle. The sentinels upon the ramparts were sounding the watch-cry in the rough tones of their native Koordish. We entered the outer court through wide, iron-cased folding doors. A second iron door opened into a long dark alley, which conducted to the room where the chief was lying. It was evident that he was becoming impatient; and, as I looked upon the swords, pistols, guns, spears, and daggers—the ordinary furniture of a Koordish castle—which hung around the walls of the room, I could not but think of the fate of the unfortunate Shultz, who had fallen, as it is said, by the orders of this sanguinary chief. He had the power of life and death in his hands. I knew I was entirely at his mercy; but I felt that I was under the guardian care of One who had the hearts of kings in his keeping. With a fervent aspiration for His guidance and blessing, I told the chief it was apparent that the means I had used were producing a good effect, though he needed more powerful medicine, which, for a time, would make him worse instead of better; that I could administer palliatives; but, if he confided in my judgment, he would take the more severe course. He consented, and I gave him an emetic, which he promptly swallowed, after he had made some of his attendants taste of the nauseating dose to see

if it was good. I remained with him during the night, and the next morning he was much relieved. He rapidly recovered, and said he owed his life to my care. I became his greatest favourite. I must sit by his side, and dip my hand in the same dish with himself. I must remain with him, or speedily return and take up my abode in his country, where he assured me I should have everything as I pleased. As I could not remain, I must leave him some of the emetics which had effected his cure.

The chief had just heard of the case of a Koordish woman from whose eyes I removed a cataract while I was at the patriarch's residence. With a spice of the characteristic passion of her sex, she was curious to know what had been the effect of the operation, and, long before the prescribed time, she removed the bandage from her eyes. But so strange was the prospect that opened before her, that she was frightened, and immediately bound up her eyes, resolved thereafter to abide by my instructions. This story was so amusing to the chief, that he continued to divert himself by rehearsing it to his courtiers, with encomiums upon my professional skill too Oriental to repeat. He is a man of noble bearing, fine, open countenance, and he appeared to be about thirty years of age. He was very affable, and on my departure he made me a present of a horse, as an



expression of his gratitude for the restoration of his health.

I now joined a small caravan, and proceeded to Salmas, and thence to Ooroomiah, where I arrived on the 7th of December, after an absence of more than eight months. For half a year I had not occupied a chair, and had long dispensed with the use of the knife and fork, in accordance with the custom of the natives. To meet again with beloved friends, and once more hear the sweet sounds of my own native tongue, and enjoy the comforts of civilized life, was indeed most delightful after my long and weary pilgrimage. I had much to awaken the emotions of a grateful heart. Along the cold highlands of Armenia, over the sultry plains of Mesopotamia, and through the wild mountains of Assyria, I had been brought in safety to my home in Media, while bright prospects of usefulness opened before me. In all the perils through which I had passed, the angel of the Lord had encamped round about me for my deliverance, and it was sweet to unite in ascriptions of praise for the abounding mercies of our covenant-keeping God.

During the winter, two brothers of the patriarch, one of them his designated successor, made us a visit, and urged the extension of our labours through all parts of their country; and the patriarch himself wrote a cordial letter, renewing his invitation for me to repeat my visit in the spring.

The following is an extract from the patriarch's letter, in which reference is had to the desires he had expressed for the extension of our labours. It is dated from the Patriarchal Cottage, "with prayer and blessing." \* \* \* "My heart went with you, O doctor, in the day that you went from me: but after I heard that you had arrived in safety, I greatly rejoiced. If you inquire of my affairs, and what I have to say, it is that word which we spoke. What I said to you before is what I have to say now. You and I are one; and there is no change touching the things you heard from me. And again may you be a blessing, and blessed with the blessings of God and the words of salvation: and may He give you joyful seasons and length of years, and remove and keep from you troubles and disquietudes."

I was desirous to promote, as far as possible, the friendly regard and confidence of the patriarch, improve our acquaintance, acquire additional information, and especially to remove any remaining doubts of the practicability and safety of travelling or residing in the mountains or among the Koords on their borders. I therefore resolved to pass through the regions of Central Koordistan, and revisit the patriarch, and proceed thence on my route towards my native land.

I left Ooroomiah on the seventh of May, 1840, accompanied by my little son Henry Martyn, then

about four years of age, together with the two bishops Mar Yohannan and Mar Yoosuph, who are connected as coadjutors with our mission. At Salmas we were joined by the two brothers of the patriarch mentioned above, and a number of Nestorians, who were returning to their homes in the mountains after spending the winter upon the plains.

Our way over the mountains from Salmas was so obstructed by the snow that we were benighted upon their summits, and slept under the open canopy of heaven, while the temperature was quite below freezing. But, fortunately, the patriarch's brothers had with them a quantity of carpeting, by means of which we made ourselves comfortable, and rested quietly till about three o'clock in the morning, when we proceeded on our way by the light of the moon. On descending into the valleys along the sources of the Zâb, we found numerous bands of Koords living in their black tents and pasturing their flocks; but they offered us no molestation, and we passed on to the fortress of Bash-Kalleh.

My friend the Koordish chief was absent in the Turkish dominions, where we shall meet with him hereafter. I spent the night with the local governor, from whom I received a friendly welcome. The next morning I continued my route along the course of the Zâb towards Jûlamerk,

which I reached on the evening of the second day. The road was much obstructed by the remains of avalanches which had slid down the steep mountain sides; and into one of these my horse made a sudden plunge, and sent me and my little son over his head into the snow, but without our receiving material injury. Once or twice afterward we experienced similar falls; but I usually dismounted wherever there was apparent danger.

The approach to Jûlamerk from the river is very grand. The road rises along the face of the mountain; till at length the traveller looks down from an almost perpendicular height of more than a thousand feet. It was a part of the road which the governor of Salmas had described in the strong figurative terms already mentioned. The castle of Jûlamerk stands upon an insulated mountain, in an opening between the higher ranges. It is distant three or four miles from the river, which is visible through the opening ravine.

The bridge leading to the patriarch's residence had been swept away a few hours before my arrival, so that I could not cross the river and visit the tribes of Jelu, Bass, and Tehoma, as I at first intended; but I was so happy as to find the patriarch a guest with Suleiman Bey, the then presiding Hakary chief of Jûlamerk. My reception was most gratifying; and during ten days which I spent in the castle, all my former impressions re-

garding the practicability and immediate importance of a mission in the mountains were fully confirmed. The confidence and interest of the patriarch in our work appeared to be increased, and he was joined by the chief in his repeated invitations for me to remain or speedily return.

I everywhere found myself an object of much curiosity, as I had exchanged the wide, flowing robes and turban, worn on my former visit, for my own proper costume, which I was accustomed to wear in Persia, retaining my beard to establish my identity. But the people very properly remarked that there was quite a deterioration in my appearance. I must certainly have appeared like a smaller person; as I became aware on seeing the chief habited in my Frank dress, which he put on in his harem for the amusement of his ladies.

My intercourse with the patriarch and his numerous visitors was of a very gratifying and encouraging nature; and I much regretted that I could not at once enter upon my labours for the improvement of this interesting people, instead of pursuing the long journey before me. But this might not be, and I hastened my departure.

Instead of proceeding through Tiyâry to Môsul, I resolved to take the more direct route by way of Van and Erzeroom, to Constantinople.

## CHAPTER IX.

Hospitality of the People.—Return by way of Van.—Night in the Valley.—Visit to Koordish Villages.—Pastoral Life.—Death of Shultz.—Van.—Interview with the Hakary Chief.—Change of his Relations.—Incident among the Koords.

*May 25, 1840.*—It was afternoon before I could leave the Koordish bey; for, after all other business was finished, and he had written a letter to the next chief beyond the borders of the Hakary country, he constrained me to wait for a repast, of which he partook with me; while his mother prepared food for us to eat on the road, spreading honey over the bread with her own hands, and rolling it up with great care. She then brought forward a bag of raisins and nuts, into which she put a small loaf of sugar, and gave it to my son, who had become a great favourite with her and with the whole household, especially with the little Koordish children. He was now able to speak three languages, Turkish and Syriac as well as English. The patriarch's sister had also sent a quantity of bread, in which was rolled up a large supply of *holwá*, or honey, butter, and flour simmered together so as to form a kind of rich cake. His mother sent us bread, cheese, and eggs, so that our *scrip* was really very well furnished by our benevolent friends in these wild mountains; a kindness, to appreciate which one must place him-

self in the same dependant circumstances, and remember that there was a scarcity of food approaching to a famine. Wheat was selling at five or six times its ordinary price, and scarcely to be obtained at all. The bey had already given my son a small sum of money, in anticipation of our proceeding next day by way of Môsul, telling him that he would have given him a mule to ride, but, on account of the snow, the roads were impassable for mules. His mother, at the same time, suspended a small gold coin, with some beads, to my son's neck, as a memento of her affection.

Such were some of the tokens of kindness which the Lord put into the hearts of this people to bestow upon the pilgrim missionary in this land of violence and blood. May *He* reward their kindness by the gift of his word and Spirit; and oh, may I be made the honoured instrument of leading them to the great Physician of souls, and thus impart a more sovereign balm than all that art or science can produce!

As we proceeded down the narrow, rugged path cut out of the mountain, and anon cast a glance down the fearful abyss, it looked more terrible than it had ever done before. I was glad, therefore, to dismount and walk for half an hour over the most dangerous part of the road, rather than trust myself to the sure-footed mule, who might, by one false step, dash me in pieces at the

foot of the precipitous declivity. Having descended to the bed of the river, we continued along its bank until about sunset, when we encamped for the night in the open air, while the boisterous Zâb sung our lullaby in notes of solemn bass. The night was clear, the stars shone with unwonted splendour, and all was hushed to silence save the river's loud roar. On either side, the everlasting mountains reared their adamantine crests, till they appeared to touch the skies; all seemed to invite to communion with nature's God. Three fierce-looking Koords had spread their brawny limbs by the side of a blazing fire, which they had kindled to supply their lack of clothing, while we were in a good degree protected from the chills that now advanced upon the night breeze. At such an hour and in *such a place*, so suited to deeds of darkness, it was sweet to realize a present God, and to know that the angels of the Lord encamp round about them that fear him for their deliverance.

*May 26.*—After a refreshing sleep, we rose with the sun, and pursued our way for some miles along the bank of the river; and then, entering the mountains, followed the valley of a large stream to its source. In our course we passed over the remains of several avalanches, in which rocks, trees, and earth had descended with immense masses of snow, upon which the feet of our inules



made but a slight impression. Near the summit of the first range of mountains, we stopped an hour in a grove of willows and wild pear-trees, that had just put forth their blossoms, shedding a delightful perfume. Another hour brought us to a small Nestorian village, where we stopped for breakfast. For want of a more suitable place, we were seated in the vestibule of the church, where several of the villagers came to see us, and brought their sick to be healed.

This is one of ten or eleven Nestorian villages which form a small district called Berwer, the whole of which now contains scarcely two hundred houses, and the people are poor and ignorant. The district is subject to the Koords, and was last year invaded by one of the nomadic tribes, when six men of this village were killed in trying to defend their flocks.

We arrived about noon at the residence of Tâhr Aga, the chief of a tribe of Koords called *Piniánshi*, comprising about 1000 households, under a nominal allegiance to the Hakary chief. Another division of this tribe (7 or 800 houses) live near the Tehoma tribe of Nestorians, and are represented as a very lawless and sanguinary clan. I spent the night with the chief, and can truly say that I was never more hospitably received and entertained than by this mountain chieftain. He insisted upon my occupying his own seat, an easy

cushion or mattress, with pillows to lean upon. A bowl of fine-flavoured sherbet was followed by coffee and other more substantial refreshments. A bountiful supply of my favourite *pilau* was served for supper; and a basket of eggs, roasted in the ashes (a common method of cooking them in this country), was in readiness after breakfast the next morning, to replenish our scrip for the road. The chief and two of his wives required my professional services; and I believe that this was the principal reason why the bey at Jilmerk desired me to take this route. Many of the villagers were suffering from coughs, which I attributed to their residence in a region of almost perpetual snow, and to their drinking large quantities of it in their water. It was a pleasant summer residence, but truly dreary in winter.

*May 28.*—Still among mountains. Passed several villages and encampments of Koords, at some of which we stopped for refreshments, giving medicines to the sick. The Koordish women in one of the black Koordish tents gave us two or three pairs of native socks, and a small piece of tent-cloth made of hair. About an hour before sunset we passed a large encampment of the Hertash Koords, who are among the most formidable robbers in the country. Their chief came out to inquire who I was, and some of the people gratified their curiosity by gazing at my Frank costume,

while the large shepherd-dogs barked at us from a respectful distance. But no molestation was offered us, and we passed quietly on to the next encampment, where we stopped for the night. Here we found the chief of the clan sick of a fever, and many suffering from ophthalmia or other complaints, so that I was evidently no unwelcome guest. Our tent was about forty feet long, and eighteen or twenty wide: one side left quite open, while a web of reeds formed the other sides. The ample roof of black haircloth was supported by a number of small poles, and secured with cords and wooden pins driven into the earth. About one fourth of the tent was fenced off with a wicker trellis for the lambs of the flock, which were kept there during the night. The lambs are only suffered to go to their dams at particular times to obtain nourishment, after the people have secured the larger share of the milk for themselves. The *milk* of their flocks is a more important consideration with an Oriental than the wool or the flesh. It is regarded as quite superior in quality to the milk of cows, especially for their favourite *yoghoort*, or sour curd. An exclamation of surprise always follows the assertion that we Americans never milk our sheep.

*May 29.*—About three hours' ride brought us to the castle of Bash-Kalleh, which we entered by a more easterly road than the one at which we left it.

In the valley of a small creek we stopped for a short time, where Shultz fell a victim to the perfidy of the Koords. We did not think it expedient to inquire of our Koordish muleteers for the place of his burial; but I was informed by an intelligent Armenian, whose sons aided in the interment of his remains, that a small pile of stones marks his solitary resting-place. The last sad office was performed secretly by some Armenians of Bash-Kalleh, who dared not remove the body to a consecrated burying-ground for fear of the Koords. One of Shultz's servants escaped to this place, where he was taken and put to death, lest he should divulge the circumstances of the murder of his master. Entire secrecy was enjoined upon every one; but it was not long before the report reached Persia, and redress was demanded by the prince. In consequence of which, the immediate agent in the murder was put to death by those who are said to have been the first instigators of the bloody deed. I was told that my safety would have been doubtful if that man had been still alive, as he would have thought that I had come to avenge the death of a countryman, and he might have killed me to avoid falling a victim to justice through my agency.

I had been told that the desire of plunder was the motive which led to the death of this indefatigable traveller. As he is said to have enter-

ed the country with considerable baggage, and to have made valuable presents to the chiefs, they would naturally suppose that his effects were of inestimable worth. But I am assured by many of the most intelligent of the Nestorians and Armenians who were in the country at the time, that Shultz had just made a visit to the orpiment mines, and that the Koords believed, from the brilliant yellow colour of the mineral, that he had found it to contain gold, and that he would cause an army to come and take possession of their country. This impression was strengthened by the circumstance that he was seen making scientific observations, measuring their castles, and writing down the observations he had made. Too great caution cannot be observed on these points by the traveller in such a country as this. ●.

We remained three or four days in Bash-Kalleh, not being able to obtain horses before Saturday, and then choosing to remain until Monday where we could spend a quiet Sabbath. We found the place dull and uninteresting in the extreme, and were thankful to obtain enough barley bread to satisfy the demands of nature. Still we were treated with great kindness.

*June 1.*—It was late in the afternoon before we could get away, our muleteers, in common with the people generally, having business in the bazar (if a few poor stalls poorly supplied deserve that

name), it being the "market-day" for the week. In the smaller towns, one day in the week is generally observed as the market-day, and that day is usually the Christian Sabbath. Hence Sunday in Turkey is called *bazar gün*, or, literally, "market-day."

About two hours out, our little party, six or eight in all, were suddenly alarmed by the appearance of armed horsemen in the glens of the mountain above us. As they were but indistinctly observed, and then suddenly disappeared, there was scarcely a doubt that they were robbers; and those of our party who had firearms put them in readiness to defend themselves. My two Nestorian attendants agreed with me that it was better to suffer ourselves to be quietly robbed of the few effects we possessed than to attempt to take any man's life.

Poorly mounted as we were, it was quite evident that flight was out of the question, and we should only invite pursuit if we showed any timidity by the attempt. It was therefore resolved to keep on our way, remaining in a compact body with what show of preparation for defence we could make. The *mutaselim*, or local governor of Bash-Kalleh, had assured me of entire safety on this road, and, moreover, promised me the protection of three of the chief's servants, who were then going to Van. The supposed robbers proved to be our desired protectors.

We proceeded over a chain of mountains, on which large banks of snow were still remaining, to the strong castle of Mahmoodieh, and thence to Van, or, as it is usually pronounced, Wán. It is a walled town or city, overlooked by an immense "rock of defence," which supports an ancient castle, and is imbosomed in extended fruitful gardens, which form the summer residence of a large portion of the people. Of these, a large portion are Armenians, who are said to number 40,000 in the district.

The lake abounds in fish, which are made an article of commerce with the surrounding districts. The water of Lake Van is so alkaline that the people use it for making their soap; while the salt from the lake of Ooroomiah is sufficiently pure for culinary use; and yet the water of that lake is so heavy, that a man will sink no lower than the top of his shoulders. Both Van and Ooroomiah are several thousand feet above tide, and the winters are as cold as in New-York.

I remained ten days at Van, and had repeated interviews with my old friend Nooroolah Bey, the Koerdish chief whom I had cured during my memorable visit to his castle in Bash-Kalleh. I had often been pleasantly reminded of him by the wild Koords of his mountains, who uniformly spoke of me as the physician to their chief. Whenever I was introduced to a stranger, the immediate inquiry was made, "What, the physician of our chief?"

It was gratifying to find him still cherishing the friendly feelings with which he welcomed me; but it remains to be seen how valuable his friendship may yet prove. Changes have occurred which have modified his power, and hereafter the traveller through his heretofore lawless country will have less to fear. It is now placed under Turkish jurisdiction. The chief has bartered his independence for an appointment from the Pasha of Erzeroom; and he was returning, an officer of the Porte, to govern his spirited clans, whom he had found too restless to control by his single arm. He also foresaw that the extension of European influence, and the consequent changes occurring in the East, might at no distant day wrest his independence and his country from him. He therefore deemed it wise to make such voluntary overtures as would enable him to retain his station as the immediate head of the Hakary tribes.

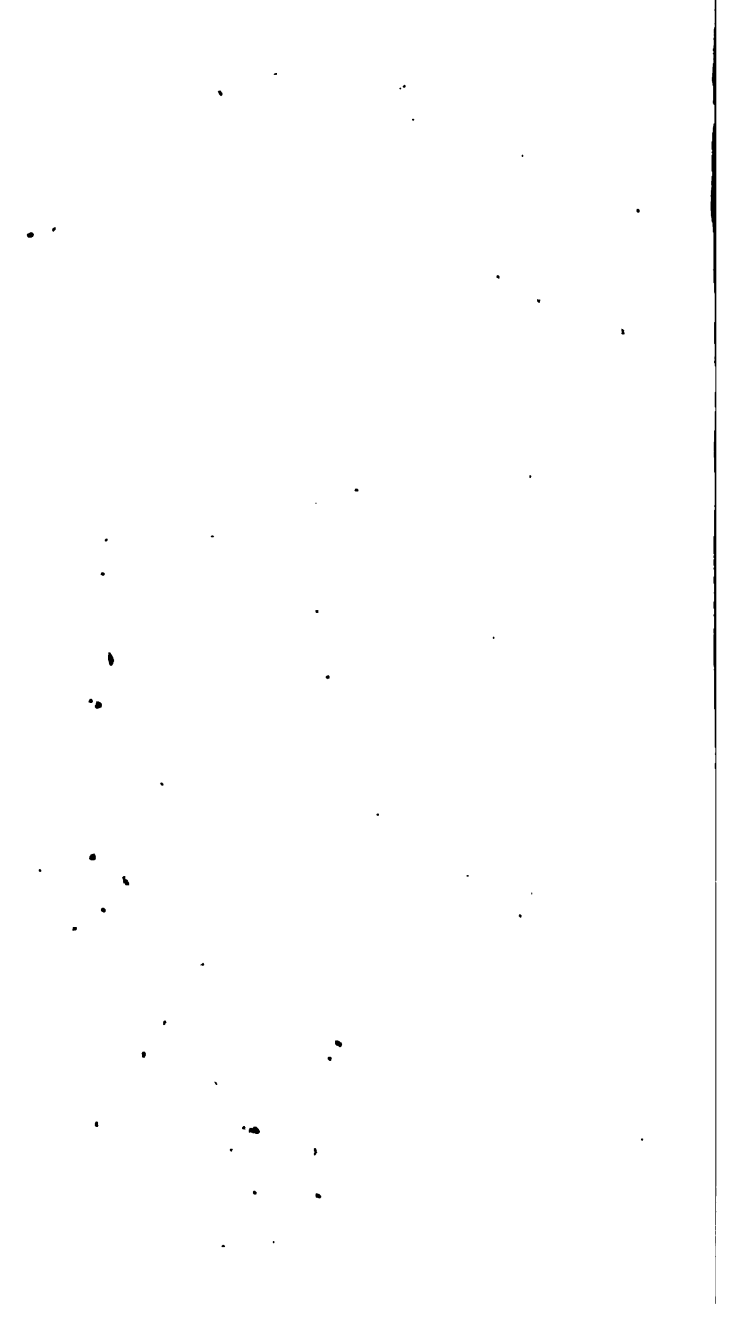
On my way from Van to Erzeroom, I met with a pleasing instance of the value of foreign protection to the traveller in these countries. While I was sleeping under the tent of a petty Koordish chief, a horse belonging to my party was stolen in the night. I told the chief that he must see that it was returned, or I should make complaint to the English consul. The horse was soon restored.



On my arrival at Erzeroom I had the pleasure to be surrounded by a circle of Christian friends. Two of my fellow-countrymen were among the number; but in this distant land, where I have experienced the kindest offices of friendship from intelligent and philanthropic gentlemen of the English nation, I can scarcely recognise any national distinction. The welcome I received from my English friends was most cordial and gratifying. Among them were the British consul James Brant, Esq., Dr. Riach, a tried friend of our mission, and Colonel Sheil, her Britannic majesty's charge d'affaires at the court of Persia. Through the politeness of the latter, I was favoured with letters to his excellency Lord Ponsonby, the British ambassador at the Ottoman Porte; and, while I was at Constantinople, I received from his lordship the warmest assurances of a disposition to afford all necessary countenance and protection to our labours among the Mountain Nestorians, in whose condition and prospects he manifested a lively interest. From our American minister, Commodore Porter, I had already experienced many favours.

From Constantinople I proceeded in one of the numerous steamers which converge at the metropolis to the city of Smyrna, where I embarked in a small merchantman, and, after a passage of seventy days, arrived safely at Boston, October 3, 1840.

**PART II.**



## CHAPTER I.

**The Revolt of the Ten Tribes.—Their Idolatry.—Captivity.—  
Are lost sight of in History.—Not yet found.—Their separate  
Existence highly probable. — Difficulties of the Subject. — Its  
interesting Nature, and great Importance.**

IN no period of their history were God's chosen people so highly favoured as in the long and peaceful reign of Solomon, who excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. But his unparalleled prosperity was more than he could bear. He was led into idolatry, "and the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he kept not that which the Lord commanded. Therefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake, but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit, I will not rend away all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jeru-

salem's sake which I have chosen." A prophet was then sent to Jeroboam with this message: "Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee, because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, and Milcom, the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments. I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even TEN TRIBES."—1 Kings, xi., 9-13, 31-35.

Accordingly, under the vain and impolitic reign of Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon, Israel rebelled against the house of David. Jeroboam was made king over all Israel (or the ten tribes), "and there was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only," with whom Benjamin had become inseparably associated. From this time the Jews were divided into two separate governments or kingdoms, which are respectively designated by the names *Judah* and *Israel*; a distinction recognised by the inspired prophets, who almost invariably speak of the ten tribes under the appellation of Israel; or Ephraim, within whose borders was the seat of the kingdom. The Israelites immediately turned from the

Lord to the worship of idols. Regardless alike of the admonitions he had received from God, and the punishment which he had so recently seen inflicted upon the house of David for their idolatrous course, Jeroboam sought to perpetuate and widen the breach between Israel and Judah, and to strengthen his new kingdom by preventing the ten tribes from going up to Jerusalem, as they were accustomed, to worship the God of their fathers. "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And he set up the one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan."—1 Kings, xii., 28–30. Thus was Israel confirmed in idolatry, that grievous sin which drew down upon them the vengeance of a holy God, after a series of unheeded warnings, exhortations, and judgments, which had been denounced upon them for two hundred and fifty years. The preaching and miracles of Elijah and Elisha were alike unsuccessful in producing reformation. Their kings took the lead in idolatry and wickedness, and even the zealous Jehu, who was specially anointed as a reformer in Israel, was a worshipper of the golden calves. "He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam which made Israel to sin."—2

**Kings, x., 31.** "Though he destroyed the posterity of wicked Ahab, and slew the worshippers of Baal, the people still transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land: they walked in all the statutes of the heathen, served idols, and sold themselves to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight." The two and a half tribes on the east of Jordan, "the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh," who had spread themselves over a large extent of country, and drank deep of the prevailing spirit of idolatry, were the first who were made captive by the kings of Assyria.—1 Chron., v., 26. But this failed to arrest the idolatrous career of the remaining tribes. Their cup of iniquity was soon filled; and they were compelled to drink it to the dregs. The hand of God, which had long held over them his chastening rod, was "stretched out still;" and it soon came down upon them in just indignation. About 19 years after the captivity of the tribes beyond Jordan (or B.C. 721), "Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor, by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day." "There was none left but the tribe of Judah only."—2 Kings, xvii., 6–18.

“From this time,” says a learned writer, “we hear no more of the ten tribes, nor is it known whether any of their descendants are in the world at present; though it is thought by many that there is a remnant in some region yet unvisited.”\* Milman, the historian of the Jews, referring to the captivity, says, “from this period history loses sight of the ten tribes as a distinct people. Priedeaux supposes they were totally lost and absorbed in the nations among whom they settled; but imagination has loved to follow them into remote and inaccessible regions, where it is supposed they still await the restoration of the twelve tribes to their native land; or it has traced the Jewish features, language, and religion in different tribes, particularly in the Afghans of India, and, in a still wilder spirit of romance, in the [aboriginal] Americans.”†

But we shall not be expected to attempt a refutation of these various theories, none of which have been supported by sufficient evidence to produce anything like a general conviction in their favour. The ten tribes of Israel are still as really the *lost tribes* as they ever have been.

The evidence which has been adduced (“Star in the West,” “View of the Hebrews,” &c.) to identify the American Indians with the lost tribes

\* Turner's Sacred History of the World, vol. iii., p. 430.

† Milman's History of the Jews, vol. i., p. 247.



is entirely circumstantial, and based chiefly upon customs, &c., which are *primitive* rather than peculiarly Jewish; customs similar to those found among the Arabs and other Eastern nations.

With respect to the Afghans, it may be sufficient to quote the testimony of that indefatigable traveller, Joseph (now Rev. Dr.) Wolff, who visited Afghanistan with the hope of finding the ten tribes. But, disappointed in that hope, he sums up the evidence in the following terms: "My doubts about the Afghans being descendants of the Jews are these: they have not the Jewish physiognomy; and the tradition of their being descendants of the Jews is *not general*; and, finally, their language does not resemble the Hebrew. Or, light, is the only Hebrew word I found in the Afghan tongue. The construction of the Pushtoo grammar entirely differs from that of the Hebrew."—*Researches*, p. 238-9. Judging from the vocabulary given by Wolff, I may also add, that the Afghan tongue resembles neither the Syriac nor the Chaldee; and their partial tradition, if evidence of a Hebrew origin, indicates a descent from the *two* tribes rather than the *ten*. Malte-Brun, vol. i., p. 45, says, "The Afghans consider themselves as descendants from Afghaun, the son of Irmia, or Bakia, son of Saul, king of Israel."

The supposition that the ten tribes are "absorbed in the nations among whom they settled," is not

only entirely wanting in evidence, but all analogy from the history of the Jews throughout the world goes to disprove the idea. Neither is there any evidence that they are amalgamated with the two tribes. On the contrary, there are numerous passages from unfulfilled prophecy which plainly intimate that the union of Judah with Israel is yet future. In a prophecy of Isaiah, which all commentators acknowledge to be future in its accomplishment, the ten tribes are repeatedly mentioned, in distinction from Judah, under the common appellations of Israel and Ephraim.—Isa., xi., 12, 13. See also Jer., iii., 18; Hos., i., 11; and Ezek., xxxvii., 16–22. In this passage from Ezekiel, which occurs immediately after the resurrection in the valley of dry bones, the prophet is told to take two sticks, representing Judah and Israel, and “join them one to another into one stick.” He is then commanded to tell the children of Israel and of Judah, that thus would the Lord unite them into one nation, and to “say unto them, thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them *one* nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.”

Now, whatever may be the precise import of these prophecies, general consent testifies that their accomplishment (and, consequently, the union of Judah and Israel) is yet future. Hence we infer that the ten tribes have at this time a separate existence.

Where they are, and what is their condition, are questions which have long perplexed the learned and curious. So many untenable theories have been proposed, and so many pretended discoveries made; in a word, the ten tribes have been so often found and lost again, that any new treatise upon the subject will almost necessarily be received with distrust; so much has the whole subject come to savour of the *visionary*. ●

The subject is certainly one of peculiar difficulty, and much of incredulity will be encountered in its investigation. More than twenty-five centuries have thrown over it a veil of almost impenetrable darkness. Nearly a hundred generations have successively arisen and been swept away; empire after empire has been founded and demolished. War has devastated the earth; hierarchies and dynasties have alike fallen; and where, it may be asked, in all this mass of ruins, or amid the structures that have risen upon them, shall we seek for the captive daughters of Israel, who were led away weeping into the wilderness in an age when the greatest events cast but a faint shadow upon the

historian's page? What changes, social, civil, and religious, may not have passed over the *lost* tribes during these revolving ages!

But let us not too hastily infer that these changes, however great, have placed their identity beyond the reach of the clearest evidence. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep;" and we may find that He has been guarding his chosen people with a watchful eye, and will glorify himself in their present condition and future prospects, as really as he has done in their past history. In his past dealings with the people of Israel, he has manifested his character and attributes with a clearness that no power of eloquent description can equal.

But the most glorious display is connected with the future. "*If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead.*" This is what clothes our subject with such importance. A spiritual resurrection is connected with the conversion of God's ancient people; a resurrection, affecting not merely themselves, but the whole world. If their rejection has been the reconciling of the world, by opening a door of hope to the Gentiles, it is to "*the world,*" most obviously, that their restoration will be "*as life from the dead.*"

Who, then, can estimate the importance of their discovery and conversion? What life, what faith,

what energy would not be infused into the Church? With what joy would even the prospect of their speedy conversion be received, connected as it is with the most precious promises of God's Word; since it is clear, from the prophecies of Scripture, that this final ingathering of Israel will be the brightest harbinger of the latter day glory?

If it shall appear, then, that Israel is even now stretching out his hands to God; if the ten tribes are found professing allegiance to Messiah their king, and bearing his name; may it not well inspire in our minds the highest hopes and liveliest anticipations of future good; hopes and anticipations which we may well believe will soon ripen to a blessed fruition, when it shall appear that they are the special heirs of the most glorious promises that remain to be fulfilled in the history of our world? Let us turn, then, to the evidence of their heirship, and see what are the credentials they offer in proof that they are indeed what the Christian world have long and anxiously sought to discover—the *lost tribes* of Israel.

## CHAPTER II.

**Tradition of the Nestorian Christians that they are Descendants of Israel.—That they came from Palestine.—Supported by the Testimony of Jews and Mohammedans.**

**TRADITION**, in its general application, is any knowledge handed down from one generation to another by oral communication. If there is nothing in the character or circumstances of those on whose authority the tradition rests to affect its probability; if they were not actuated by interest or prejudice, or wanting in the means of knowledge as to what they relate, their tradition is to be received as direct testimony in matters of history. The more important the event, the more likely is it to be correctly transmitted by tradition to a remote posterity. Thus we find some account of the deluge, which destroyed the antediluvian world, among the most remote and barbarous nations of the earth; a circumstance that would go far to prove this great event, in the absence of all historical records. Indeed, this universal tradition, together with geological indications, is appealed to as an unanswerable argument with infidels, who deny the credibility of the Scriptures. Without recommending the example for imitation, it may be stated as another evidence of the importance attached to traditionary testimony, that the Coun-

cil of Trent ascribed equal authority to tradition and the Bible. But, as the purity of gold is tested by the furnace, so truth appears more lovely after passing through the closest scrutiny. To this test let us bring the traditions of the Nestorian Christians relating to their Hebrew origin.

First, then, I remark, the tradition is general, and universally believed by the Nestorians throughout Assyria and Media. They speak of it of their own accord, in all places and in various circumstances. Smith and Dwight, in the course of their short visit to the Nestorian Christians, were struck by their singular assertion that they were the descendants of the ten tribes.\* They recognise the fact in conversation with each other, as well as with strangers. One of their priests charged upon his people their accumulated guilt and responsibility, on the ground of their relation to those "to whom pertained the covenants, and promises;" and his language was that of rebuke, and not of complaisance. Often have I heard the remark from their ecclesiastics, in allusion to their Hebrew ancestry, that theirs were a stiff-necked people, like their fathers of old. These incidental allusions to their Jewish ancestry prove most conclusively that their tradition is received as a well-known truth. Though it subject him to reproach, no one denies that he is of the children of

\* See Researches in Armenia, vol. ii.

**Israel.** The learned and ignorant, old and young, all acknowledge the relation.

2. The hatred existing between the Nestorians and the Jews forbids the idea of the fabrication of the tradition. What motive could lead them to claim affinity with their most implacable enemies? Is it credible that an unfounded tradition of this kind, connecting them with a people with whom they will not even eat bread, would have been universally received among all the various Nestorian tribes? By whom, and in what stage of their history, could it have been forced upon them? Would there have been no dissenting voice among a widely-extended people? Here, as everywhere, the Jews are the most despised and persecuted class of the people. An odium is consequently attached to all who are allied to them. For fear of this odium, I have seen Nestorians hesitate to give a reply when interrogated respecting their ancestry; yet they finally admitted their Jewish origin.

3. Their ignorance of prophecy forbids the idea that the tradition originated with their religious teachers, in view of the great temporal blessings promised to the Jews. They have no anticipations of such blessings for the Israelites in particular. They believe in the final triumph of Christianity in the world, but in this they claim for themselves no pre-eminence over other Christians.



They read the prophets little, and understand them less. Their interpretation of the prophetic writings is generally mystical and confused.

4. The secluded situation of the great body of the Nestorians almost precludes the possibility of their having received the idea of a Hebrew ancestry from the neighbouring nations. They chiefly inhabit almost inaccessible mountains, where they are remarkably shut out from extraneous influence. Strangers have seldom or never entered their mountain fastnesses, and I know of no people who have so little intercourse with those around them; moreover, if their neighbours had ranked them with the Jews, would they not have repelled the idea of such a connexion? Is it credible that they would have received it as the basis of a general tradition? Or, were it possible that such a fabrication could be palmed upon them in one place, how were they to induce their distant brethren to admit the imposture? and that, when every feeling would revolt at the idea of such a connexion.

It may be asked whether the Nestorians have any historical records in proof of their Hebrew origin. I have seen none.\* Their histories seldom extend beyond a short record of the passing

\* Priest Dunka, who has long been employed as an assistant in this mission, and sustains a character for veracity, and, we hope, for consistent piety, assures me that he saw near Mōaul a history in which it was expressly stated that they, the Nestorians, were Beni Israel (the children of Israel).

events of the day, occasionally inserted by the writer or the copyist in the margin of some religious book. The patriarch's most ancient manuscripts were destroyed by the water about sixty years ago, when taking them across the river Zâb; and, unless future research bring to light authentic records on this subject, we must content ourselves with the answer often given to my inquiries for written documents in support of their tradition. "For us," say the Nestorians, "such a record is unnecessary, as we are well acquainted with the fact of our Israelitish descent, the account of which is handed down from father to son through successive generations. In our early history, certainly such a record could not have been called for; and, had any one made it at a later period, we might have suspected some sinister motive. Moreover, we consider such a tradition, received by all classes of the people, better testimony than written records, which few could read or understand, and which are liable to be corrupted or lost; whereas our tradition no one can dispute or alter, as it is known to all. We are certainly *Beni Israel* (sons of Israel), there is no doubt of it."

Considering the circumstances of this people, there is much good sense in this reasoning. Where none but a few ecclesiastics can read, there is little encouragement for multiplying books in a language which is unintelligible to the common peo-

ple, by the slow process of transcribing, especially when such records are so liable to be lost; and it can scarcely be doubted that such an important portion of their history is altogether safer in the bosoms of a hundred thousand people, who carefully transmit it to their posterity, than it could be if trusted solely to perishing scrolls of parchment. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive how a fact which so deeply concerns their people could be lost, when it is made the subject of remark in the family circle and in the public assembly, and the ground of expostulation, reproof, and instruction by their religious teachers.

It is not a complicated history, requiring a detail of incidents or language liable to be misapprehended or forgotten. It is one simple, bare fact, so unique and prominent in its character that there is no room for mistake. At the same time, the people are so peculiar in their language, character, and circumstances, that it is doubtless true of the whole if of any. It is the one simple fact, that the Nestorians are what they profess to be, the *children of Israel*.

The Nestorians have also another tradition, which, though distinct in its nature, is intimately connected with this, and adds not a little to the testimony. It is, that their forefathers, at some early day, came to the region now occupied by them from the *land of Palestine*. Precisely in

what period of the world this occurred they do not know, though they are sure of its truth. That it was before the Christian era will appear evident, when we come to examine the history of their conversion to Christianity. What people besides the captive Israelites have ever been carried away from Palestine to Assyria and the cities of the Medes? That the ten tribes were placed on the very ground now inhabited by the Nestorian Christians, we shall endeavour to show in the ensuing chapter. That fact, when fairly exhibited, will give great importance to this tradition, adding the character of direct testimony to what would otherwise be only circumstantial. It will, at least, afford a strong confirmation of our main position. But, direct and positive as is the testimony of the Nestorians themselves respecting their Hebrew ancestry, we need not rest so important a question on their testimony alone. We shall now bring forward witnesses whose competency none will dispute, and whose testimony is no less unequivocal and positive than that of the Nestorians themselves.

The *Jews* who dwell among them acknowledge the relationship. They admit that the Nestorians are as truly the descendants of the Israelites as themselves. Do they not know? or is it possible that the great mass of the ten tribes were converted to Christianity without their knowl-

edge? Providentially for our cause, the ten tribes are not all nominally Christian. A remnant seem to have been left as witnesses in the case. Dispersed through the country of the Nestorians, and surrounding them on every side, are some thousands of nominal Jews, still adhering to Judaism, who claim to be a part of the ten tribes carried away captive by the kings of Assyria. These are the witnesses now on the stand. They testify, though sometimes reluctantly, that they and the Nestorians are brethren of the same stock; that they and the Nestorians have a common relation to the house of Israel, a common origin.

We cannot charge these Jews with interested motives in giving this testimony. They are ashamed to admit that such an apostacy has taken place from the faith of their fathers, and they are reluctant to acknowledge their worst enemies as brethren. So strong is this feeling, that they will sometimes prevaricate, and finally give only an equivocal answer when questioned upon the subject. This they do to avoid the main question, whether their early ancestors were the same. With the general propensity to falsehood that exists, some of them may perhaps even deny this altogether, under the apprehension that in some way they might be injured by the admission. It is only to those who have gained their confidence that they readily make the acknowledgment, and then

it is often done in a confidential manner, that they may not fall under the censure of their brethren for confirming such a fact. To some of the bishops and priests in the employ of this mission, individual Jews have repeatedly said, "We are no more really the children of Israel than yourselves."

The first time I myself heard this testimony given by the Jews was March 6th, 1840, which I recorded at the time as follows: Received a visit from two learned Jews, Ezekiel and Daniel, of Ooroomiah, who, in the presence of the bishops Mar Yoosuph and Mar Eliyah (Elias), two priests, and other Nestorians, most explicitly acknowledged that the Nestorians were the sons of Israel, a circumstance with which, as they affirmed, the Jews were well acquainted. Priest Dunka, for my sake, then asked them if they were sure of the fact; and they replied emphatically, that they knew that the Nestorians were children of Israel; but, as the Nestorians had departed from the faith of their fathers, their people were ashamed to own them as brethren. In answer to my inquiries, they said they had records containing an account of the time and circumstances of their conversion to Christianity; ~~but~~, as they did not themselves possess them, it was not in their power to furnish me with a sight of these historical manuscripts. Indeed, they appeared to feel, when I asked them for a sight of their records, that they

had already gone too far in what they had said; but they still promptly answered my inquiries regarding the time when the Nestorians became Christians. They also gave other information, which will be mentioned in its proper place.

More recently, other Jews have repeatedly made the same statement to the writer, and to some of his associates in the mission. On one occasion their chief rabbi confirmed the testimony of the Hebrew origin of the Nestorians, while in their synagogue, and in the hearing of Messrs. Holladay, Stocking, and myself. He said that the Nestorians apostatized from the Jewish faith in the days of Christ or his apostles.

I quote the following from the journal of my respected associate, Mr. Stocking, upon this point, for the sake of the direct testimony it contains, and not to anticipate the evidence derived from the identity of language.

*April 28.*—Yesterday I received a visit from two Jews, whom I had employed to bind two or three Nestorian manuscripts. Priest Yohannan was present. As the Jews of this city use a dialect of the Nestorian language, we conversed in that. They understood perfectly the language we used, and the priest understood perfectly their language, and occasionally explained to me a word that I did not easily recognise. After conversing freely for some time on matters of business, I in-

quired of the Jews how it was that they spoke the Nestorian language, and whether they had learned it from them. They answered without hesitation, 'No.' I then asked them if the Nestorians had learned the language they speak from their people. They again answered 'No.' 'How is it, then,' I inquired, 'that you speak the same language?' One of them answered, that these people (the Nestorians) had separated themselves from them. I asked them again if they knew it was so, and if it was so written in their books. They answered that they knew it was so, and that they had books that contained the fact. From the manner in which I conducted my inquiries, the Jews could not have known that I had any other object in view than simply to get an explanation how their language happened to be like that of the Nestorians; and it was not till our conversation had proceeded some time on the subject, that they comprehended fully my object, and discovered between themselves the design of my inquiries."

Such testimony, and from such a source, requires no comment. What court of justice would reject it? The Nestorians say to their alienated brethren, the Jews, "We are children of the same father: will you own us as brethren?" "Yes," they answer; "you are brethren of the stock of Israel. We are a part of the ten tribes, and you are no less really so."



On both sides the motive is strong to disclaim the alliance; and it is especially so on the part of the Jews, who are evidently chagrined that such an apostacy should have taken place from their ancient faith.

The antipathy existing between the Jews and the Nestorians is mutual and strong; so that there can be no motive on the part of either to wish to be regarded as of the same origin. The state of feeling they cherish towards each other is much like that which existed between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Some of the learned Mohammedans also testify to the Hebrew origin of the Nestorians; but they are not all informed upon the subject. Many of those living in Ooroomiah came from the region of Kho-rassan, where a part of their race still remain. When the Gospel was first preached here, a great proportion, if not the whole, of the people were followers of Zoroaster, and the religion of the Magi prevailed extensively till the days of Mohammed. Hence we cannot expect the Persians generally to be in possession of definite information regarding the ancestry of their Christian neighbours. But it is interesting that any of them are able to add their positive testimony to the Hebrew origin of the Nestorians.

## CHAPTER III.

The Places to which the Ten Tribes were deported: Assyria, Halah, Habor, Gozan, Hara, Media.—Now occupied by the Nestorian Christians.—But few nominal Jews in these Places.

“SEARCH for a thing where it was lost,” is a maxim which every child understands and practices. But, in relation to the lost tribes, we have acted directly contrary to this maxim, and sought for them everywhere except in the place where they were lost, while this remained unexplored. The shepherd whose flock has strayed away seeks them where they were lost. God’s sheep have been carried away into the wilderness and lost. But, happily, we are told just where they were placed. They were not left to wander, for they still had keepers over them, who placed them in particular pastures; keepers who were doubtless too much interested in securing the fleece to allow them to stray away. These keepers were the kings of Assyria. The first was Tiglath-pileser, who “carried them away (even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh), and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.”—1 Chron., v., 26. Shortly after, Shalmaneser, another “king of Assyria, took Samaria, and carried Israel away (i. e., the remaining tribes) into As-

syria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor, by the river of Gozan, unto this day."—2 Kings, xvii., 6, and xviii., 4.

It is very remarkable, that, though carried away by different conquerors at an interval of about 19 years, they were all settled in the *same place*. The only difference in the account is, that in 1 Chron. the name *Hara* is inserted, in addition to the places mentioned in 2 Kings. "The insertion of this name," says Professor Robinson, "may be an error of transcribers, as the reading of 2 Kings, xvii., 6, seems correct and appropriate."\* His opinion is confirmed by the fact that this name is not found either in the Septuagint or the Syriac versions. The word *Hara*, in Hebrew, signifies "mountains, or mountainous regions;" and as the country to which the ten tribes were deported, and where most of the Nestorian Christians now reside, is, as we have seen, one of the most mountainous in the world, the word *Hara* was very naturally added as a *gloss* or marginal explanation, and finally became a part of the text. How else can we account for its differing from the Greek and Syriac, the two best versions for correcting false readings in the Hebrew text? On the very natural supposition that it was added as a gloss or explanation, as there are abundant examples in other passages, it very materially aids us in settling

\* Robinson's Calmet, art. Gozan.

the topography of the country which became the future abode of the ten tribes; while, at the same time, it harmonizes the accounts of the inspired writers. We have, then, in three different places, the testimony of inspiration, that "the king of Assyria did carry away Israel into Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."

Assyria was bounded, according to Ptolemy, on the north by part of Armenia and Mount Niphatis; on the west by the Tigris; on the south by Susiana; on the east by part of Media, and the mountains of Choatra and Zagros. The country within these limits is called by some of the ancients *Adiabene* (or, rather, Adiabene was included in Assyria), and by others *Aturia* or *Atyria*. Assyria is now called *Koordistan*, from the descendants of the ancient Karduchi, who occupied the northern parts. It lies between Media, Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Babylon. It is admitted that, at the period of its greatest prosperity, the Assyrian empire stretched beyond the limits generally assigned to it by both ancient and modern writers. But, at the time the ten tribes were carried thither, it had again become reduced within these defined boundaries,\* the Medes having re-

\* This occurred seven years from the building of Rome, and in the second year of the eighth Olympiad, which was the 748th before Christ.—Diod. Sic., l. ii. Athenæus, l. xii. Herodotus, lib. i., Justin, l. i., c. iii.

volted, and Babylonia being then a separate kingdom.\*

The name Aturia or Atyria, as is observed by Dion Cassius (xviii., c. 28), is a mere dialectic variety of pronunciation instead of Assyria; and the province thus designated probably was the original central point from which the power as well as the name of Assyria subsequently spread farther to the south and west. After the dissolution of the Assyrian monarchy through the revolt of the Medes, the name Assyria was again restricted to this northern province, while the southern parts received the appellation of Babylonia from the principal town, or Chaldea from the name of its inhabitants.†

That the province of Adiabene was once included under the name of Assyria is distinctly asserted by Pliny (Hist. Nat., v., c. 12). The sacred historians of that age evidently used Assyria in its proper or more limited sense, as may be seen by reference to Isaiah, xi., 11, where Elam and Shinar are mentioned as being without the bounds of Assyria. The kings who carried away the ten tribes and put an end to the kingdom of Israel were the first who reigned at Nineveh after the destruction of the first Assyrian empire, when the

\* Rollin, book iii., chap. ii.

† That Babylon and Nineveh were then under separate kings, is evident from a comparison of 2 Kings, xix., xx., where both kings are named. Also Herodotus, i., c. 95, 102, 106.

limits of Assyria became so well defined that there can be no room for mistake on the subject.

I have been thus particular on this point, as different writers have sought to identify various places and rivers near the Euphrates, the Caspian Sea, and even on the confines of India, with Halah, Habor, and Gozan, which should evidently be sought for in Assyria.

**MEDIA** being allowed by all to have been contiguous to Assyria, there is little room for doubt as to the general region in which the "cities of the Médes" are situated. Whether the term *cities* is to be understood literally, as in our version and the Hebrew, or whether we should read *villages*, as in the Syriac and Vulgate, or *mountains* of the Medes, as in the Septuagint, I leave for the learned to settle. Either of these readings is equally applicable to my purpose, as we find Nestorians in the mountains, cities, and villages of Media; and near to Assyria. I may, however, remark, that, as the Medes were in a state of revolt at the time of the captivity of the ten tribes, it is hardly to be supposed that the king of Assyria could penetrate far into Media without encountering the rebellious and warlike Medes. Hence we must look for the settlements of the captive Israelites on or near the borders of *Assyria*, the greater part of them being left within its boundaries, in the places we shall now proceed to examine. And first in order is

*Halah.* It is sufficient for our purpose that there is abundant testimony to prove that this place was within the proper boundaries of Assyria. It appears to have been in the region of the Lycus or Zâb River, and, probably, not very far from Nineveh. Bochart, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, and Cellarius are of the opinion that Halah is the same as Calah in Gen., x., 11, 12. From its connexion with the context, Calah must have been in Assyria; and in this commentators are generally agreed. S. Ephraim and the later Syrians say that Calah is the modern Hatareh, which is about a day's journey N.N.W. of the ruins of Nineveh. Ptolemy and Strabo appear to make it a district of country embracing this region, and extending east as far at least as the river Zâb. Chalah or Halah, says Assemani,\* entirely agrees with our Chalah or Chalavana, which Ptolemy (b. vi., ch. i.) places near the mountains of Armenia from the Tigris to the Lycus (Zâb), or to the region of Arapachites. From Chalah (Halah) comes Chalachena, which Strabo (b. ii.) calls Chalachena: "Even to Chalachena and Adjabena, which are beyond the bounds of Armenia;" and in b. xvi., "the plains near to Ninus (Nineveh), and Dolomena, and Chalachena, and Chazena, and Adjabena." The place which the Syrians call Halah,† and the

\* Biblioth. Orient., tom. iv., p. 419.

† Halah and Habor have the same orthography and pronunciation among the Nestorians as in the Syrian Bible.

Arabs Halavana,\* was a seat of a Nestorian archbishop. Halah, or Halachæ, was one of six archbishoprics, whose prelates appointed the Nestorian patriarchs.† Thus it appears that Halah was in Assyria, and that it was also a seat of influence among the Nestorian Christians. The whole region described by Ptolemy and Strabo under this name is, or has been, occupied by Nestorians.

HABOR is the name of a river. And it is a remarkable fact, that we find a river rising in the central highlands of Assyria which retains this name unchanged to the present day. No one acquainted with the Hebrew will dispute the propriety of this interpretation. The passage in 2 Kings, xvii., 6, Gesenius translates thus: "And placed them in Chalites (Halah), and on the Chabor (Habor), a river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."‡ Our own version even admits of the same sense, if we only reject the particle *by*, which is printed in italics to show that it was not in the original. Habor, as we shall see, is a river of Gozan. The Zâb is also a river of Gozan; and, being the larger stream, it may emphatically be called *the river of Gozan*.

GOZAN, according to Cruden, Holden, and others, signifies *pasture*. By reference to Gesenius's

\* Bib. Orient., tom. iv., p. 418. Ib., p. 415.

† Ib., p. 416-418.

‡ Robinson's Calmet, art. Gozan. See also Habor.



Hebrew Lexicon,\* it will be seen that the sounds of G and Z frequently interchange, while the words in which these letters are used retain the same signification after the mutation has taken place. Thus Gozan may change to Zozan without altering the sense. Zozan is the name given by the Nestorians to all the highlands of Assyria which afford pasturage for their numerous flocks. The region in which the Habor and the Zâb rise, and through which they flow, is peculiarly of this character. It is celebrated for its excellent pastures—the Zozan—to which many of the Nestorians repair with their numerous flocks, spending the summer on the banks or the highlands of the Habor and the Zâb. Considering the similarity of these names, and the high authority we possess for regarding Gozan and Zozan as one name, there can be no doubt that this is the Gozan of the Scriptures, and especially as it is found in *Assyria*, and connected with the river Habor. From the boast of Sennacherib (2 Kings, xix., 12; Isaiah, xxxvii., 12) of the conquests of his fathers, it seems that the kings of Assyria had destroyed the

\* γ "Zade. There is a singular affinity of this letter with the palatals, but which can be proved by not a few examples in whatever way it is to be explained. Perhaps in the same way in which, in the Sanscrit language, the gutturals (K G) pass into the palatals Tsch, Dach [Z]."—*Gesenius's Lex., Appendix.*

I am indebted to my friend the Rev. A. L. Holladay for this information, and for some other philological aid.

inhabitants of Gozan before the Israelites were transplanted thither, so that they had the land to themselves. "Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as *Gozan* and *Haran*," &c. It was doubtless a great achievement to destroy the barbarous inhabitants of such a difficult mountainous country; and nothing is more natural than that the kings of Assyria should wish to place in it an industrious people like the captive Israelites, while it was well suited to their pastoral life. Whether in the other places the Israelites were settled among the original population, we have no means of knowing. But as the inhabitants of Gozan and Haran, i. e., Hara (the words have the same sense), had just been destroyed or driven out, it is reasonable to infer that the ten tribes had the entire possession of this region. And, moreover, its great natural strength would enable them to maintain their position entirely distinct from the surrounding Gentile nations.

Just such is the present situation of the Nestorian Christians in this very region, which became the adopted home of the ten tribes. From time immemorial their abode has been among these unchanging rocks, and they never intermarry or mingle with those around them. In government, religion, language, and customs, they are as truly a peculiar people as were ever their Hebrew ancestors

in the land of their fathers. The whole of the present Nestorian population have their abode in the places we have described, as that to which the ten tribes were transplanted.

The most of them occupy the central parts of this region, where, as before remarked, they live distinct and alone. This central portion of Assyria was formerly called *Adiabene*; a district, as we have seen, that was often included in Assyria. Were there any room for doubt as to this being the particular region to which the kings of Assyria carried Israel captive, our accurate knowledge of the locality of Adiabene would enable us to remove it, for we find the ten tribes in this district in the first century. In a speech made to the Jews by their own King Agrippa, it is alluded to as a fact known and recognised by their whole nation assembled in council at Jerusalem, that their brethren of the ten tribes were in Adiabene more than seven centuries after they were carried away captive. In his famous speech to the Jews at Jerusalem, reported by Josephus, Agrippa inquires of the Jews whether any of them would extend their hopes beyond the Euphrates, and suppose that their "fellow-tribes"\* dwelling in Adiabene would come to their assistance. What could be more specific? Let the reader consult

\* In the original Greek it is *ἑμοφύλους*, or fellow-tribes.—Josephus, de Bell., ii., 16.

Butler's ancient atlas, or any other good authority, and he will find that Adiabene is precisely the region now occupied by the independent tribes of the Nestorian Christians. The country southwest of the Lycus or Zabatus (Greater Zâb) was the Aturia of the ancients; that to the southeast of that river, as far as the Caprus (Lesser Zâb), was called Adiabene. Ammianus Marcellinus observes (lib. xxiii., c. 20) that the province of Adiabene derives its name from two rivers between which it is enclosed, the Diaba and Adiaba, i. e., the Greater and Lesser Zâb. The Arabian name of Adiabene is Zawabiab, which is likewise a derivation of the word Zâb.—(See Assemani, *Bib. Orient.*, iv., 711.)

In Adiabene proper there are at this day nearly a hundred thousand Nestorians, while only a small remnant of Jews can be found among them. What have become of the latter? how came the former in their place? In Media there are about twenty thousand Nestorians, and but only a tithe of that number of Jews. The number of Nestorians on the northwest side of the Habor is not known. They are represented as numerous. This appears probable from the fact, that, about four years ago, three Nestorian bishops visited the patriarch from that region. Colonel Sheil, who passed near their country, represents them as very numerous.\* On the opposite banks of the Habor

\* I learn that many of them have become papists, or Chaldeans.

the whole country to Adiabene and Halah is more or less settled by Nestorians, and they were formerly even more numerous than at present. In the region of the Habor, a larger portion of the ten tribes appear to have remained unconverted to Christianity than in any other place. Still their number is inconsiderable; perhaps not more than five or six hundred households. But it is remarkable that the greater part of these reside *in* the *Habor*, or, rather, on an *island* in that river, in the ancient town of Zacho.

The Nestorian population in Media and Assyria, including a small portion who have embraced the tenets of Rome, may not be far from two hundred thousand, while the nominal Jews in the same territory probably do not exceed twenty thousand souls. No one will suppose that twenty thousand individuals are all that remain of the ten tribes. It is not unlikely that the existing remnant of the ten tribes exceeds the estimate we have given of the Nestorian population, as small parties may have gone to more distant regions. But, on account of the great obstacles which hinder their emigration, these detached parties are probably small. It may be that future inquiries will identify the Yezidees on the west of the Tigris with the ten tribes.\* There are also on the border of Assyria from twenty to forty thousand Syrian

\* This point will be examined hereafter.

Christians, who have many traits in common with the Nestorians. Should it hereafter be found that they have the same Jewish characteristics, the evidence of their Hebrew origin will be strong. But our present inquiries relate to the Nestorians.

While the whole region of country to which the ten tribes were transplanted is now more or less occupied by the Nestorian Christians, it is worthy of particular notice, that the most central parts of this region are, and have been from time immemorial, entirely inhabited by the Nestorians, to the exclusion of every other class of people. A great part of the independent tribe of Tiyâry, and the whole of the tribes of Tehoma, Bass, Jelu, Diss, and other minor tribes, are included in the boundaries of Adiabene, where the great body of the ten tribes were in the first century of the Christian era. They are either the captive Israelites, or they have entirely usurped their place.

## CHAPTER IV.

The Ten Tribes have not been removed from Assyria.—Historical Proof.—Various circumstantial Evidence.—Inference from the Prophetical Writings.

HAVING seen that the ten tribes were carried into Assyria, and placed in the particular districts now occupied by the Nestorian Christians, we proceed to show that they have never been removed from that country. The inference will then naturally follow, that, inasmuch as there are very few nominal Jews in that region, and no others claiming a Hebrew descent, the Nestorians must be the descendants of the lost tribes.

1. First, then, I remark, *We have no evidence of their having been removed.* The learned author of the Sacred History of the World, and Milman, the historian of the Jews, speaking of their captivity, agree in the statement "that we hear no more of these ten tribes; that history loses sight of them as a distinct people." No one pretends to have heard of their removal.

2. *They did not return with the captivity from Babylon.* Individuals, it is admitted, may have accompanied the Jews of the Babylonish captivity to Jerusalem. In no sense, however, can it be said that, as a people, the ten tribes returned with the

**Jews of the Babylonish captivity.** Their release was in the reign of Cyrus, when about fifty thousand returned to their own country; and we are told expressly, that they were "those whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had carried away unto Babylon."—Ezra, ii., 1. About seventy-nine years after this, in the reign of Artaxerxes, Ezra went up from Babylon to Jerusalem with a small number of Jews, amounting in all to less than 2000 males, among whom there were a few from the ten tribes, and the remainder belonged to the tribe of Judah. Josephus, after giving an account of the permission granted by the king to Esdras or Ezra for the return of the Jews, says, "So he read the epistle (from Xerxes or Artaxerxes) at Jerusalem to those Jews who were there; but he kept the epistle itself, and sent a copy of it to all those of his own nation that were in Media.\* And when these Jews understood what piety the king had towards God, and what kindness he had for Esdras, they were all greatly pleased; nay, many of them took their effects with them, and came to Babylon, as very desirous of going up to Jerusalem; but then *the entire body of the people of Israel remained in that country.*"†

3. *The ten tribes were in the land of their cap-*

\* Assyria had long before become swallowed up in the more fortunate kingdom of the Medes, and at this time was included under the name Media, of which it was a subject province.

† Jos., Ant., b. xi., ch. v.



*tivity in the first century of the Christian era.* Josephus, in connexion with what we have just quoted, expressly affirms that "there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans; while the ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers."\* This was towards the close of the first century, and after the Gospel had begun to be preached in Assyria, as we shall hereafter show. As an historian, Josephus is too well and too favourably known to require any commendation. Being himself a Jew and a man of learning, he must have been well acquainted with the correctness of what he here states regarding the ten tribes; and it does not appear that any sinister motive could have influenced him in making the statement we have quoted above. But we have other testimony equally satisfactory, in the speech† of King Agrippa already referred to, in which the king alludes to it as a well-known fact, that the ten tribes were then beyond the Euphrates, in Adiabene. This speech was made to prevent their war with the Romans, which ended in the destruction of their city and temple. It was addressed to the whole nation of the Jews dwelling in Judea. From the manner in which their captive brethren of the ten tribes are alluded to, as subject to the Parthians, the power then dominant

\* Jos., Ant., b. xi., ch. v.

† Jos., Bel., lib. ii., c. xvi.

in the East, and living in Adiabene, it is clear that in the last half of the first century the ten tribes were living in Assyria, the very region to which they were carried captive.

4. *They were in the land of their captivity in the fifth century.* This is expressly and repeatedly stated by Jerome, in his valuable Commentary upon the Prophets, written in the beginning of this century; and no authority could be higher than his upon this subject. "It is well known that Jerome was the most learned of the Latin fathers."\* "His profound erudition, his extensive researches, his various travels, and his long residence in Palestine," add great weight to his testimony. "Jerome, of all the Latin fathers," says Horne, "has rendered the most important services to the Christian world by his elaborate Commentary on the Scriptures," the work from which we have made our quotation; and we are told that "his Commentary on the *Prophets* is regarded as the best of his works."† We have seen that the Jews very well knew where the ten tribes were in the first century, and it is evident that they could not have lost all knowledge of them before Jerome, during his twenty years' intercourse with the people of Palestine, obtained his information from them.

5. *The ten tribes are to this day in the land of their captivity.* Says the learned Dr. Buchan-

\* Horne's Introduction, v. i., p. 78.

† Ibid., v. ii., p. 745.

an, "It will be easy, perhaps, to show that the great body of the ten tribes remain to this day in the country to which they were first carried captive. If we can discover where they were in the first century of the Christian era, which was seven hundred years after the carrying away to Babylon [about eight hundred years after the captivity of Israel], and again where they were in the fifth century, we certainly may be able to trace them up to this time."

"Josephus, who wrote in the reign of Vespasian," continues Buchanan, "recites a speech made by King Agrippa to the Jews, wherein he exhorts them to submit to the Romans, and expostulates with them in these words: 'What! do you stretch your hopes beyond the river Euphrates? Do any of you think that your fellow-tribes will come to your assistance out of *Adiabene*? Besides, if they would come, the Parthians will not permit it.'\*—(*Jos., de Bell., lib. xi., c. 16.*) We see from this oration, delivered to the Jews themselves, and by a king of

\* Says Whiston in relation to this speech, "What seems to be very remarkable here is this, that, when Josephus, in imitation of the Greeks and Romans, for whose use he wrote his Antiquities, did himself frequently compose the speeches which he put into others' mouths, they appear, by the politeness of their composition and their flights of oratory, to be not the real speeches of the persons concerned, who usually are no orators, but of his own elegant composition; the speech before us is of another nature, full of undeniable facts, and composed in a plain, unartful, but moving way; so that it appears to be King Agrippa's own speech, and to have been given Josephus by Agrippa himself, with whom Josephus had the greatest friendship."

the Jews, that the ten tribes were then captive in Media [Adiabene or Assyria] under the Persian princes."

"In the fifth century, Jerome, author of the Vulgate, treating of the dispersed Jews in his notes upon Hosea, has these words: 'Unto this day the ten tribes are subject to the kings of the Persians, nor has their captivity ever been loosed' (tom. vi., p. 7). And again he says, 'The ten tribes inhabit at this day the cities and mountains of the Medes' (tom. vi., p. 80). There is no room left for doubt on this subject. Have we heard of any expedition of the Jews going forth from that country since that period, like the Goths and Huns, to conquer nations? Have we ever heard of their rising in insurrection to burst the bonds of their captivity? To this day both Jews and Christians are generally in a state of captivity in these despotic countries. No family dares to leave the kingdom without permission of the king. Joseph Emin, a Christian well known in Calcutta, wished to bring his family from Ispahan, but he could not effect it, though our government interested itself in his behalf."—(Buchanan's Researches.) From the beginning of the fifth century (when we last hear of the ten tribes) to the present day, we have historical records of these countries, which would have informed us of so important an event as the removal of the ten tribes to a distant land. But

history is silent upon the subject. The native histories, Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, which are numerous, say nothing of the removal of the captive Israelites from this country; and tradition is equally silent upon the subject. "The Jews," says Buchanan, "have a never-ceasing communication with each other in the East; so that, when anything interesting to the nation of the Jews takes place, the rumour will spread rapidly throughout all Asia." Since the first century they have been scattered throughout Asia, and over almost the whole world; and they eagerly watch the signs of the times regarding their own people. It is therefore incredible that so important a circumstance as the removal of the ten tribes (then a very numerous body) should have entirely escaped their notice. But they too are silent upon the subject. Until the period when, as we shall see, the Gospel was preached to them, they tell us plainly that "the entire body of the people of Israel—the ten tribes—are beyond the Euphrates till now;" that "they are an immense multitude," and "in *Adiabene*." But, from the time they received the Gospel, the unconverted Jews cease to own the ten tribes as brethren; and their rabbins, to blind the eyes of inquirers, assign to them a fabulous country, which they call "the land of darkness, beyond the Sabbatical river!"\* But let them tell us when

\* Wolf's Researches, p. 2.

they emigrated thither ; under what circumstances, and which way they went ; for it is impossible, situated as they have been, that they should not have known their movements. Their silence upon the subject, and their strange fable, combine to establish the fact that the ten tribes are now in this very country, and followers of Him against whom the Jews vent their bitterest hatred : but they are ashamed to own them as brethren.

Some of the more distant Jews, however, appear not to have received this fable of the rabbins, and their testimony goes to prove that the Israelites are still in the land of their captivity. In writing of the ANCIENT or black Jews of India, Buchanan says, " I inquired concerning their brethren, the ten tribes : they said it was commonly believed among them that the great body of the Israelites are to be found in Chaldea and in the countries contiguous to it, being the very places whither they were first carried into captivity ; that some few families had migrated to regions more remote, as to Cochin and Rajapoor in India, and to other places yet farther to the East ; but that the bulk of the nation, though now much reduced in numbers, had not to this day removed two thousand miles from *Samaria*." And again : " While the author was among the Jews of Malabar, he made frequent inquiries concerning the ten tribes. When he mentioned that it was the opin-

ion of some that they had migrated from the Chaldean provinces, he was asked to what country we supposed they had gone; and whether we had ever heard of their moving in a great army on such an expedition." This they appear to have regarded as an unanswerable objection to the idea of their removal; and well they might so regard it, considering our various means of information, since we last hear of them in the land of their captivity. Though they had heard of less important circumstances regarding the ten tribes, as the emigration of a few families, they had heard of no such general movement: and who has heard of it?

Having dwelt so long upon the historical and circumstantial evidence, we shall dismiss this part of our subject after naming one more witness—I mean the BIBLE. In the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, which commences with one of the clearest prophecies respecting our Saviour, and goes on to describe the peace and blessedness which shall pervade the world on the final triumph of his kingdom, when the "wolf shall dwell with the lamb," and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," we are assured that "it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left from ASSYRIA, and from Egypt,

and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the Sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of *Israel*, and gather together the dispersed of *Judah* from the four corners of the earth; and there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people which shall be left from *ASSYRIA*, like as it was to *Israel* in the day that he came up out of the land of *Egypt*.”

I am not now going to discuss the subject of the return of the Jews; for whether the return spoken of be literal or figurative, does not affect the question at issue. The point I have in mind is the great prominence here given to *Assyria* in connexion with *Israel*. Why is it? since there are very few nominal Jews in *Assyria*; not a tenth part as many as there are in some other countries. And yet it is not only named first in order, but in the closing verse of the chapter it is mentioned by itself, as though it held a higher importance than all the other places together; and not only so, but, on account of his people in *Assyria*, God is going to work mighty wonders, like the dividing of the Red Sea. “With his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry shod; and there shall be a *highway* for the remnant of his people which shall be left from *ASSYRIA*.” Can



this drying up of the river be anything different from the drying up of the Euphrates in Rev., xvi., 12, that the way of the *kings of the East* might be prepared? an interesting question, which will be more particularly examined hereafter.

As Assyria is mentioned first in the order of places, and made particularly prominent in the close of the chapter, so also the *ten tribes*, or the Israelites, are mentioned first in order among the remnant of God's chosen people "which shall be left from Assyria:" "And shall assemble the outcasts of *Israel*, and gather together the dispersed of Judah" (v. 12). We are expressly told that Israel, or the ten tribes, shall be assembled. From whence, if not from Assyria? And who are to be brought from Assyria, if not the ten tribes? Were there room for a doubt whether by *Israel*, mentioned as it is here, as distinct from Judah, was meant the ten tribes, the specific appellation of *Ephraim*, occurring in the following verse no less than three times in connexion with Judah, would at once remove that doubt.

That the fulfilment of this prophecy is yet future is generally admitted; and, moreover, it is too obvious, from its connexion, to require a single argument to prove it. If, then, as appears certain from this prophecy, the ten tribes are, at some future time, to be recovered from Assyria, it follows that they are there now.

A knowledge of geography is sufficient to show that the ten tribes cannot be in any of the other places named by the prophet, unless it be in the "Islands of the Sea;" an idea inconsistent with their being "the *outcasts* of Israel," in distinction from "the *dispersed* of Judah," and utterly at variance with what we have learned of their history. We shall find a similar reference to Assyria in Isaiah, xxvii., 12, 13. In former chapters we have shown that the ten tribes did not return with Judah from the Babylonish captivity. The accomplishment of what is here predicted must, therefore, be future, as its language implies: "And ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of *Assyria*, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem." Again, in Hosea, xi., 11, we are told, "they shall tremble as a dove out of the land of *Assyria*, and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord," which, being introduced with the affecting apostrophe, "How shall I give thee up, *Ephraim*? how shall I deliver thee, *Israel*?"—was evidently spoken of the ten tribes. Its accomplishment is to be ushered in by some great revolution, when the Lord "shall roar like a lion;" something like the drying up of the Euphrates, as in the preceding quotation. Again,

in Zach., x., 9, 10: "They shall remember me in far countries, and they shall live with their children and turn again. I will bring them again out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of *Assyria*." The name *Assyria*, which occurs so frequently in connexion with the ten tribes, should obviously be taken in the same sense as in 2 Kings, xvii., 23: "So was Israel carried away out of their own land to *Assyria* unto this day." In the first passage that we quoted (Isa., xi.), it certainly cannot be taken in a wider sense, as *Shinar* and *Elam*, &c., are mentioned with it as distinct countries.\*

If the view we have taken of these prophecies be correct; with our knowledge of the present population of *Assyria*, the inference is unavoidable, that the ten tribes must be identical with the Nestorian Christians. Let us see how it appears. The ten tribes were carried into *Assyria*. The time of their return is still future. They are therefore in *Assyria* at the present time. Now the Nestorians are the only people in *Assyria* who can be identified with the ten tribes.

Leaving the subject of their conversion to Christianity for future consideration, we will now examine the internal evidence, or the proof existing among themselves of their Israelitish origin.

\* This prophecy was uttered after the captivity of the ten tribes, and, consequently, subsequent to the division of the ancient Assyrian empire, which occurred B.C. 747.—Diodorus Siculus, lib. ii. Athenæus, lib. xii. Herodotus, lib. i. Justin, lib. i., c. 3.

## CHAPTER V.

**Their Language.**—The same as that spoken by the Jews in their Region.—Evidence derived from it that they came from Palestine or Syria.—That they are Descendants of Israel, and not of Judah.

I HAVE already remarked that a small portion of the descendants of the ten tribes, by a special Providence, appear to have been reserved, unconverted from Judaism, as witnesses to the identity of their converted brethren. We have heard their direct testimony that the Nestorians have a common ancestry with themselves. They have also a common language. Not that the Nestorians speak a dialect of the Hebrew; for they do not. The Jews living in the places to which the ten tribes were transplanted, speak a different language from their brethren in other parts of the world. It is a dialect of the Syriac, which indicates for them a different ancestry. This is also the language spoken by the Nestorians. They are radically the same. The Nestorians themselves testify to this, and say there is little or no more difference between the language of their Jewish neighbours and their own, than there is between the several dialects spoken among themselves. Of this I am satisfied, after extensive observation in all parts of their country. I have seen Nestorians from Oo-

roomiah converse with Jews at Amâdieh, without knowing from their language that they were Jews; and I can now converse with the Jews of Ooroomiah in their own dialect with about the same ease that I can with some of the mountain tribes of Nestorians in theirs. Other members of this mission have noticed the striking similarity of the dialects spoken by the Jews and Nestorians of Ooroomiah; and it is worthy of remark, that one of them, on first conversing with a Jew in his own native Syriac, supposed that the Jew had been learning the language of the Nestorians for the sake of obtaining their custom in trade. The following testimony to the identity of the language spoken by the Nestorians and Jews of Ooroomiah is given by the Rev. A. L. Holladay, whose judgment in the case no one will question, when it is known that, after being for some time a professor of languages in one of the American colleges, he has prepared a grammar of the modern Syriac, the medium of communication which he has used in his intercourse with both Jews and Nestorians. "The language of the Nestorians of Ooroomiah differs so little," he remarks, "from that of the Jews in the same city, that I can consider it only as a dialect of the same. This language, and the dialects which I have heard spoken by individuals belonging to several of the mountain tribes of Nestorians, had evidently a common origin."

Mr. Stocking, who has also become familiar with the vulgar Syriac spoken by the Nestorians, and has aided in reducing it to system, likewise testifies to its common origin with that of the Jews of this province. "I have repeatedly conversed with the Jews of Ooroomiah in the language of the Nestorians, which is so similar to their own that they both naturally use their respective languages as the common medium of communication with each other. It is evident that they are only different dialects of the same language." Some of the learned Jews acquire a sufficient knowledge of *Hebrew* to converse in it; and they also learn to read their Chaldee Targums. But the common people understand neither of these languages. The vulgar Syriac is their vernacular tongue, and is spoken as exclusively in their families as it is in the domestic circle of the Nestorians.

The one cannot have learned it from the other, for the Nestorians and Jews hold little or no social intercourse with each other, except for the casual transaction of business. A Nestorian will not eat with a Jew, and they rarely enter each other's dwelling. And, moreover, they have no motive for learning each other's language, as they have here a common medium of communication in Turkish, while the Koordish and Arabic affords facilities for all necessary intercourse in those parts of Assyria where there are Jews. How came the Nestorians

and Jews of this region by this common Syriac language? Neither of them could have acquired it here, as it was never vernacular east of the Euphrates.

That the language used by the Nestorians is derived from the Syriac, and not from the Chaldee, any scholar will be satisfied by comparing them. The following testimony on this point is from Rev. A. L. Holladay of this mission. "Mr. Perkins and I, after some consultation and thought, gave our opinion, that the modern Nestorian spoken here is immediately derived from the ancient Syriac. This opinion was sent to Professor Robinson long ago, and his answer concurs with it." More recently, the learned professor Rödiger of Germany has written an article upon the subject which strongly confirms this view. Says the Rev. J. Perkins, "The body of the language comes as directly from the venerable Syriac, as clearly as the modern Greek does from the ancient."

The use of the Syriac language by both the Nestorians and Jews of this region is an important fact, evincing that they are both alike aliens from the same country. In support of this opinion, we may adduce the tradition of the Nestorians which we have mentioned, that their forefathers came from the land of Palestine, as did the Jews of course.

But was Syriac the language of the ten tribes

in the land of their fathers? Did all the Jews speak Syriac, or had Israel a different language from Judah? These are questions which I would gladly leave for the learned to settle. But they are so intimately connected with my subject that I cannot well avoid them, unless I were to take the less satisfactory course of throwing the burden of proof upon the objector, by challenging an explanation of the fact that the Jews of this region do speak Syriac, and the means by which they and the Nestorians came by this language in this region, so remote from that in which it was vernacular. But, though the lapse of ages has involved the subject in much obscurity, we may, perhaps, arrive at an approximation of proof, a reasonable probability that Syriac had become the language of the ten tribes before their captivity.

It is now generally admitted that Syriac was the language in which our Saviour conversed while upon earth, and the general language of Palestine at that day.\* The Greek, which was somewhat common, was certainly of later growth than the Syriac; while Hebrew was only known as the language of books. It has been thought by some that the Syriac (Aramean) was introduced from Babylon on the return of the captive Jews. But the Chaldaic of that day (the language of Babylo-

\* See an able article in the first volume of the *Biblical Repository* upon this subject.



nia), of which a sample has come down to us in the Book of Daniel, possesses at least a strong dialectical difference from the Syriac; and we may reasonably infer, from the interpretation of the letter of the Samaritans to Artaxerxes, that there was the same dissimilarity in his day. "And the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and *interpreted* in the Syrian tongue."—Ezra, iv., 7. The term *Aramean*, which is here rendered Syrian, it is well known comprised both the Syriac and Chaldee; and, as the latter was the language of Babylon and the former of Palestine, how reasonable to suppose that it was written in the one and interpreted into the other, thus: "It was written in the [western] Aramean tongue (or Syriac), and interpreted in the [eastern] Aramean tongue (i. e., the Chaldee)." What else can we make of it? To say that a letter was written in English and translated into English would be absurd. As this letter was written from *Samaria*, the capital of the kingdom of Israel, it appears that the Syrian language was in use there at that day, less than two centuries after the removal of the ten tribes. How came it there? Certainly it was not derived from the returned Jews; for, because of existing animosities, the Jews and Samaritans held little intercourse with each other; and, moreover, it was the western and not the eastern Aramean that was employed; consequently, an in-

terpreter was required to translate it into the latter. If, then, so soon after the removal of the ten tribes, the Syriac was the language of Samaria, their capital, what is there unreasonable in the supposition that it was the language of the Israelites themselves? I might have mentioned, as additional evidence of the very early and general prevalence of the western Aramean or Syriac language in the territory of the Israelites, the early date assigned to the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch. All acknowledge its great antiquity. Some, who have given particular attention to the subject, believe it to have been made before the schism took place between the Jews and Samaritans.\* At whatever period this version was made, it could not have been called for before the Syrian or Aramean had taken the place of the Hebrew language, in which they already had the Hebrew Pentateuch in the Samaritan character.

But our main argument will be found in the position of the ten tribes in relation to the surrounding nations. When the ten tribes revolted from Judah, their kings, as we have seen, spared no effort to make them a distinct people from the other Hebrews. If, to perpetuate the breach between the two nations, they were ready, in the face of the most signal warnings, to lead the Israelites into idolatry, would they, as the means of securing the

\* See Horne's Introduction, vol. ii., p. 14.

same end, hesitate to encourage among them the use of a *different language*? Connected as they were with the Syrians, they would most naturally acquire their language. That they so early adopted the strange gods and idolatrous rites of the Syrians, is difficult to explain on any other supposition than their having a *common* medium of communication. This is also evinced by their becoming confederates with the Syrians in their wars against Judah. But no circumstance more conclusively shows the almost necessary introduction of the Syrian tongue among the Israelites, than the fact that they were so completely subjugated by the Syrians. For a whole generation or more, the Syrians oppressed and wasted them till they "had made them like the dust by threshing." After the death of Hazael, king of Syria, who was raised up as a special scourge to Israel, and who oppressed them for more than twenty years, the Israelites gained some advantages over their Syrian masters; but it was not till several years later that they finally threw off the Syrian yoke. The ten tribes had become reduced to such straits by their cruel servitude to the Syrians, as to call forth the interposition of God in their behalf: "For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel that it was very bitter; for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from

under heaven ; but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam, the son of Joash.”\*

How can we be at a loss, after their forty years' servitude to the Syrians, and their civil and religious intercourse with them for two and a half centuries, from the revolt to their captivity ? It is not difficult, then, to account for the fact, that *the ten tribes, before their captivity, spoke the Syriac language*. If it be objected that a conquered nation would be slow to adopt the language of their oppressors, I appeal to the history of those countries where such changes frequently occur. Where the people, influenced by religious prejudice or other reasons, have shown a repugnance to make the change, they have, in some instances, been compelled to do it by severe inflictions. This was true of many of the Greeks of Asia Minor. At the point of the sword they have been made to exchange their classic language for that of their Mohammedan foes. And in Palestine itself, the Arabic has taken the place of the Syriac, as that did of the Hebrew.

The close affinity between the Hebrew and Syriac, I need scarcely remark, rendered the change peculiarly easy to the people of Israel. Consequently, it may have been effected almost imperceptibly to themselves, as one generation suc-

\* Compare 2 Kings, x., 32 ; xiii., 3-7 ; xiv., 26-27, with Chron. of Eng. Polyglot.

ceeded the other during their subjection to the Syrian kings ; or rather, I might say, during the two hundred and fifty years of their religious and national intercourse. And if, as we have supposed, the change was encouraged by the policy of their kings, to strengthen the wall of separation between Israel and Judah, it is almost inevitable that the ten tribes should have acquired the Syriac language. Now, add to all this circumstantial proof the fact that the Jews, dwelling in the regions to which the ten tribes were carried captive, do to this day speak the Syriac language (a language used by no other portion of the Jews of whom we have any knowledge), and the conclusion cannot be avoided, that their ancestors obtained that knowledge before their captivity. It appears, then, from their language as well as other testimony, that the Jews now living in "Halah and Habor, by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes," are descendants of the ten tribes ; and that they spoke the Syriac tongue at the time they were deported to these places. The number of the Jews still professing Judaism, however, is altogether too small to allow of the supposition that they are the only representatives of Israel, to whom such prominence is given in the unaccomplished predictions of the inspired Prophets. Still they are sufficiently numerous to be important witnesses to the identity of the Nestorians with the lost tribes.

As far as a common language can in any circumstances identify one people with another, so far the language of the Nestorians proves their Israelitish origin. Had this been the country in which the Syriac language was vernacular, the evidence would not have been so conclusive. But it requires uncommon credulity to believe, that since the fifth or even the first century of the Christian era, the ten tribes have been removed from the very places now occupied by the Nestorians, and that ANOTHER *people, speaking the SAME language*, coming from the *same* country, and bearing the same name, have filled their place! But all this, and much more equally incredible, must those admit to be true, who deny the just claims of the Nestorians to the name *Beni Israel*, and who reject the corroborated testimony that has been adduced in proof of their lineal descent from God's ancient people.

It is well worthy of remark, that only among the Nestorians and nominal Jews of Media and Assyria is the Syriac, at this day, a living language; unless an exception be found among the Syrian Christians, already mentioned, dwelling west of the Tigris, and who may, perhaps, also have a Hebrew origin. The use of a Syriac liturgy by other Christians besides the Nestorians does not militate against the justness of our conclusions. The most of those who use this lan-

guage in their church service live within the bounds of Syria, and the famous Syrian school at Edessa introduced it into the churches in its immediate vicinity. But with them, and with the Christians of Malabar, it is the language of books only; and it no more proves that the people among whom it is used are Israelites, than the use of the Latin language in the churches of Ireland proves that the sons of "the Emerald Isle" are Romans. The cases are obviously parallel. Throughout Syria and the greater part of Mesopotamia, *Arabic* is the spoken language of the Syrian Christians; while in Orfa, the ancient Edessa, where the Syriac literature was the most cultivated, the Syrian Christians speak only Turkish. Neither in Diarbékir, Mardîn, nor Môsul, is the Syriac spoken, except by a few who have learned it as a classical attainment, or acquired it among the Nestorians of Assyria. Their church service in Syriac is not only unintelligible to the common people, but even to some of the officiating clergy. Were the Syrian Christians to make converts in Africa or India, they would introduce the Syriac language into their religious worship. But this would not identify the Africans or Indians with the Nestorians. It is, however, a very different thing when two people, having other strong points of resemblance, use in common a vernacular language peculiar to themselves. This they must

have acquired in common, at a remote period of antiquity, since an entire want of social intercourse between the Jews and Nestorians forbids the idea that they have learned it from each other in modern times.

Hence the unavoidable necessity of our adopting the explanation which has often been given by both the Jews and Nestorians, that their common medium of communication is the consequence of their common ancestry, and, at the same time, affords convincing proof that they are both alike the children of Israel.



## CHAPTER VI.

Names applied to the Nestorian Christians.—Proof derived of their Hebrew Origin.—Beni Israel.—Macedonians.—Syrians.—Chaldeans.—Nestorians not appropriate.—Why used.

THE multiplicity of names used to designate the people now under consideration may produce confusion, unless the subject is fully understood. But they all admit of a satisfactory explanation, and, as will be seen, furnish convincing testimony to their Hebrew origin.

BENI ISRAEL is used generally to designate the lineal origin of the Nestorians. Ask any intelligent Nestorian for information relating to his ancestry, and he replies at once, "We are sons of Israel." It is a term familiar to all; and we might, with as much propriety, deny them the name of Christians, as to refuse our assent to this more ancient appellation, since they lay claim alike to both, while their rites and customs and other circumstances furnish nearly as satisfactory testimony in the one case as in the other. But, while they assert an inalienable right to this name, so significant of their Hebrew origin, still, as their specific character as *Jews* has merged in the one they now bear as Christians, and as their national character is in a manner lost in their long cap-

tiyity, they now more commonly apply to themselves another name. The name *Beni Israel*, however, is not unfrequently used by the Nestorians; nor is this the first time it has been brought before the public. It is distinctly mentioned by writers upon the Persian Christians as evidence of their relation to the Jewish church.\*

NAZAREANS is a term, very commonly employed by themselves and others to designate the Nestorians.† It is specific in its application to the Nestorians, and is never applied to the Armenians or other Christian sects. As evidence of their Hebrew origin, it may be, in some respects, even more satisfactory than the expressive appellation, sons of Israel.

The term *Nazareans* has been well defined to mean "Christians converted from *Judaism*, whose chief error consisted in defending the necessity or expediency of the works of the law, and who obstinately adhered to the practice of the Jewish ceremonies." In other words, they were "Jews or Israelites converted to Christianity;" i. e., *converted Jews*. Dr. Semler, a German writer, says they were "those who more rigidly maintained the Mosaic observances." Calmet mentions them

\* See Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge, art. Persian Christians.

† I have seen more than one letter written by Nestorians to the patriarch Mar Shimon, in which he was styled "Patriarch of all the Nazareans."

as "*descendants of the original Jewish Christians, and, as Jews, were too harshly treated by those who should have been their Gentile brethren.*" Jerome speaks of them as *Hebrews* believing in Christ. Mosheim says, "those who have the title of Christians among the Greeks, were among the *Jews* called Nazareans;" and, "after their separation from their [Jewish] brethren, although they would not discard the ceremonies prescribed by Moses, yet they would not impose them upon the *Gentile* Christians. They, moreover, rejected the additions made to the Mosaic ritual by the doctors of the law and the Pharisees."\* The learned Bishop Horsely† and others who have examined the subject, appear to have taken similar views, not regarding the Nazareans as a distinct sect, but as Christians converted from Judaism. That the Jewish converts, in the early age of the Church, tenaciously retained many of their ancient rites, is evident from their zeal to impose them upon the Gentiles, teaching "that it was needful to command them to keep the law of Moses."‡ But the apostles, after much deliberation upon the subject, in a general council decided against putting this heavy "yoke" upon their Gentile brethren. We have good reason, therefore, to believe that the latter never adopted the rites of the Jews, nor

\* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., v. i., p. 170. † Reply to Priestley.

‡ Acts, xv., 5.

the name of Nazarean, to whom these rites were peculiar. It must, then, have been applied exclusively to the Jewish converts. Hence the conclusion that the Nestorians must have been Jews. This conclusion derives important support from their retaining, in connexion with this name, very many of the observances of the Jews. Had they the name of Nazarean without these peculiar customs, or any other evidence of Hebrew ancestry, we might be led to think that, in some unaccountable way, it had been incidentally adopted. I am led to this reflection by the fact that the Syrian or St. Thomas Christians of Travancore, in India, have also the name of Nazaranee\* or Nazareans. And in Syria† the term is used in a general sense, probably because that was the land of the first Hebrew converts, whose name appears to have there survived them. But this should obviously be regarded only as an exception to a general rule; since, as we have seen, the term is well defined, and supported by the most abundant testimony. It is more probable, however, that the former, whose case alone calls for particular notice, derived the name from the Nestorians‡ who were driven to

\* Buchanan's Researches, Appendix.

† In Mósul, as mentioned by Mr. Southgate, the term is made to include all the Christians in that vicinity. The reason is obvious from the fact that most, if not all, of them are of Hebrew origin.

‡ Yates's Indian Church History.

seek refuge in India by the bloody persecutions of the fourth and seventh centuries. They may be, therefore, in part at least, a branch of the present Nestorians of Media and Assyria. We have good evidence that they were formerly of the Nestorian faith, though they have more recently become connected with the Jacobite Syrians. Or they may be converts from some other branch of the Hebrew family. It is worthy of inquiry, whether the Syrian Christians of Travancore have not traditions, rites, customs, or other evidence of a Hebrew origin.\*

\* The following are some of the evidences which have occurred to the writer :

1. Their name, Nazarean (Nazaranee), denotes a Hebrew origin.
2. They abstain from pork and every other meat prohibited in the law of Moses.—(Wolff's Researches, p. 469.)
3. They have Hebrew names, as Zacharias, Urias, Joshua or Jesu, Matthew, Luke, Abraham, &c.
4. They appear to have emigrated from the western parts of Asia.
5. They have an ancient inscription on a metallic plate, in a triangular or Babylonish character, with signatures attached to it in an old Hebrew character ; both of Western origin : the former denoting great antiquity, and the latter a connexion with the Hebrews. Did Dr. Buchanan transmit a fac-simile of this inscription to the learned societies of Europe, as he intended? Its contents, if known, may throw some light on this subject.
6. If Thomas preached in India, he was probably drawn thither by existing Hebrew colonies, as it will be seen that he was an apostle of the circumcision before going to India, where there appear to have been Jews before that day. That the Apostle Thomas preached in India we have the testimony of numerous Greek, Latin, and Syrian authors, quoted by Assemani (Bib. Orient., vol. iv., p. 5-25, 435) ; also of the Jews of Malabar, who,

If farther evidence were wanting to show that the name Nazarean is applicable exclusively to converted Jews, it is found in their use of a separate gospel in their own language (Syriac), which, from its exclusive use by the Jewish converts, was called the gospel of the Nazareans. "The fathers," says Buck, "frequently mention the gospel of the Nazarenes, which differed in nothing from that of St. Matthew, which was either in Hebrew or Syrian, for the first converts, but was afterward corrupted by the Ebionites." Horne adopts the "opinion, as that which best harmonizes with the consent of antiquity, that St. Matthew wrote first a Hebrew (or Syriac) gospel, *for the use of the first Hebrew converts.*" "This was evidently the gospel of the Nazareans," as he immediately mentions its subsequent corruption by the Ebionites. Why was this gospel written in the language of the Jews? Most obviously, because it was for the use of Jewish converts, i. e., the Nazareans. Gibbon also adds his testimony as follows, to the received definition of the term: "the Jewish converts, or, as they were afterward called, the Nazareans"\* (ch. 15).

Before leaving this subject, I will add the testimony as we are informed, state that Thomas came there in the year of Christ 52.

\* As the terms Nazaranee and Nazariya occur in the Syriac gospels, there can be no doubt of their being the same as Nazarean; or of the application of this term to the Nestorians.

timony of Mosheim, that, "as the name Nazarean was never used to designate the Gentile converts, so neither were the rites of Judaism ever introduced among them." Upon this point he remarks: "In those churches which were composed, either wholly or principally, of Jews, I can easily believe the Jewish ceremonies were so far retained as the different characters of the two religions would permit. And this may be evinced by a good many examples. But that the same took place in other churches, in which either no Jews, or only a few, were found, is not merely uncertain, but incredible."\* Farther proof on this point is unnecessary. It is quite clear that the Nazareans were converted Jews; and the Nestorians, being Nazareans, must be converted Jews.

The name of SYRIANS (or Syrianees), in its application to the Nestorians, may have originated in their use of a Syrian liturgy, or, more probably, from their having been a branch of the church of Antioch. This venerable church, having been divided by various schisms, each division considering itself the orthodox party, claimed the exclusive right to the name of Syrians. Hence, with the Nestorians, it is nearly equivalent to the term orthodox Christians, and it is sometimes used to denote Christians generally.

CHALDEAN is a name commonly used to designate

\* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., vol. i., p. 103.

nate the papal, but it is seldom applied to the orthodox Nestorians; and, when so applied, it is used to express their relation to Abraham, who was from "Ur of the Chaldees." Having passed some time in the region of the ancient Chaldeans, I entered the Assyrian mountains with some expectation of identifying the Nestorians with this people; but I found no evidence in support of that idea. The independence of character which they possess is equally a trait of the Carduchians or Koords, who inhabit the very region where Xenophon\* found the Chaldeans, and with whom some learned critics have thought them identical.† There is reason to believe that the application of this name to the Nestorians, or to any branch of them, is of recent date.

"The present Chaldean Christians," says a late writer,‡ "are of recent origin. It was in A.D. 1681 that the Nestorian metropolitan of Diarbékir, having quarrelled with his patriarch, was first consecrated by the pope patriarch of the Chaldeans. The sect was as new as the office, and created for it. Converts to papacy from the Nestorian and Jacobite churches were united in one body, and dignified by the name of the Chaldean church. It means no more than papal Syrians, as we have

\* Xen., Anab., iv., 3, 4; v., 5, 9; vii., 8, 14.

† See Robinson's Calmet, article Chaldeans.

‡ Researches of Smith and Dwight, vol. ii., p. 106.



in other parts papal Armenians and papal Greeks.\* There appears to be no propriety in applying this name to the Nestorians as a Christian sect; and its casual employment among them is a circumstance of little importance, except as it may lead to wrong conclusions respecting their origin. If its occasional use proves anything regarding their origin, it indicates their relation to the Father of the Faithful, agreeably to their own explanation.

NESTORIAN is a name disliked by the people thus designated. They rarely apply it to themselves, and they are averse to its application by others, lest, as it seems, they should be thought to participate in the reputed heresy of Nestorius, a bishop of Constantinople, who was excommunicated from the general church A.D. 431. But the reason which they assign for objecting to the use of this name is, that they never derived either their doctrines or their rites from Nestorius. They reverence him for raising his voice against the worship of images, and against the prevalent use of the title *Mother of God*; which, as they affirm, virtually takes away the humanity of our Saviour, and thus leaves us without a *Mediator*. But having themselves never applied any other title than *Mother of Christ* to the Virgin Mary, and their worship having never been polluted with images;† while,

\* Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.*, vol. iii., p. 623.

† See *Researches of Smith and Dwight*, vol. ii., p. 202-242.

at the same time, they have ever held to the human and Divine nature in one person in Christ, they ask, where is the propriety of calling their ancient church after a bishop who lived in a comparatively late day, and with whom they never had any connexion? It is true, they espoused his cause as the cause of an injured man, whom they regarded as a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus, persecuted for righteousness' sake; and on this account the enemies of Nestorius endeavoured to fasten reproach upon them by calling them after his name.

Throughout Protestant Christendom, however, the name of Nestorian is justly honoured; and there seems to be no good reason for discarding it at this late day, established, as it is, by long conventional usage, and interwoven with the history of the Church and the world.

But, it may be asked, were all of the *Nestorians* who were dispersed throughout the East in the days of the caliphs, descendants of Israel? Probably not. We do not attempt to identify as Israelites all who once bore that name. Nor need we, at this day, trouble ourselves about those who for ages have ceased to have a name or a place beyond the historian's page. Those that remain upon the stage, by their peculiar language, customs, and various other circumstances, appear to be a distinct and peculiar people. Nor should we pass by unnoticed the special providence of God,

by which they have been preserved, while thousands around them, who once bore the Christian name, have either been cut down by the sword of persecution, or have prolonged their lives at the expense of the character and the name of Christians. Numbers, it may be, fled to India for refuge from the sword of Mohammed, which desolated these lands in the seventh century. But, during those sanguinary wars, and the more relentless persecutions of Tamerlane, the chief asylum of God's ancient people has been the almost inaccessible fastnesses of the Assyrian mountains, where the sword of their enemies has never been able to penetrate.

This is just the account that the Nestorians now inhabiting the Persian districts give of themselves: "For a long time," say they, "our present abodes were deserted. Driven from their homes by persecutions, which swept off great numbers around them, our fathers sought an asylum among our fellow-tribes in the mountains. When the country became quiet, we gradually returned to our present homes, the mountain valleys being too narrow to furnish us even a scanty subsistence." This account is confirmed by the fact, that many of their principal families, who are the most likely to have preserved these traditions, are able to show that their ancestors came from particular mountain districts; a fact well attested by the tribes in the

mountains, as well as by the people of the plain. Hence the entire separation which has taken place between the descendants of Israel and those Nestorians who had been converted from among the Gentiles. The former, having a common language and common sympathies, which constituted a strong bond of union with their countrymen, were not likely to receive at the point of the cimeter the religion of the Koran, while they could obtain an entrance to the only safe place of retreat among their brethren of a common stock. The upland tribes were able to defend only the strongest part of their mountain; besides, from their scanty resources, they could not have furnished supplies to any but their own brethren, who fled to them from the defenceless parts of the country.

These circumstances, together with their peculiar language and character, no doubt produced a complete separation of the present Nestorians from those who were not of the posterity of the ten tribes. With these facts before us, there will be no room for confusion in applying alike the names Beni Israel and Nestorians to the same people.

But, while it is believed that all who found a refuge among the Assyrian tribes were of the posterity of Israel, and, consequently, that their descendants, of whom we are now treating, are to this day an unmixed race, we do not affirm that there were not others belonging to the ten tribes

who sought a home in more distant lands. But it is most natural to suppose that the great body of them would seek a nearer refuge (as they affirm was the case) among their own brethren in Assyria. While some may have settled upon the Malabar coast, and given their name (Nazaranee) to the Syrian Christians of Travancore, it may be that others sought refuge in the less distant region of Afghanistan; where, being but a small minority, they may have been absorbed in the varied population of that country; or, if living by themselves, adopted the language, as well as the religion, of those around them; a circumstance the more likely to occur if their numbers were small. But, with our want of evidence that any of the Israelites are to be found there, this idea can only be received as mere conjecture. Admitting that small parties from the ten tribes migrated to more distant places, this no more proves that "*the ten tribes*" are not now in Assyria, than the existence of foreign colonies of the French proves that "*the French nation*" are not now in France. Hence, if the Nestorians of this region are Israelites, we may, with all propriety, consider them as *the Ten Tribes*.

*Josephus*

## CHAPTER VII.

Observance of the Mosaic Ritual.—Sacrifices.—Vows.—First-fruits and Tithes.—Keeping the Sabbath.—Regard for the Sanctuary.—Forbidden Food.—Ceremonial Impurities.—Separation of Women.

THAT the converted Jews continued to observe the ceremonial law, as far as was compatible with their profession of Christianity, there is abundant proof in history; while the evidence is equally clear that these onerous rites were never imposed upon the Gentile converts.\* Hence the observance, by the Nestorian Christians, of the peculiar rites and customs of the Jews, furnishes very strong evidence of their Hebrew origin. So peculiar were the demands of the Mosaic ritual on many points, that there is no possibility of their adoption and perpetuation by mere accident or casual coincidence. If some of these rites, as in the case of sacrifices, were practised by other nations, yet there were collateral observances, connected with them by the Jews, so unique in their character as to leave no room for mistake. Some of the Jewish rites, being obviously incompatible with Christianity, must not be looked for among the converts from Judaism. But if the reason for their discon-

\* Acts, xv., 1-29. Mosheim's Eccles. Hist., vol. i., p. 103, 170.

tinuance, in particular cases, can be clearly indicated, the evidence, as a whole, will not be essentially diminished. Let us look at the application of this principle in relation to *sacrifices*. That Christ has offered himself a sacrifice to atone for the sins of his people; that we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*, is the foundation of the Christian's hope; consequently, it is clear that it would be a virtual denial of Christ as "*the propitiation for our sins*," to continue to offer the atoning sacrifice or sin-offering of the Levitical code. But the Jewish ritual prescribed other sacrifices, which were in no way connected with the atonement. If, therefore, we find a body of Christians continuing to offer these sacrifices after the manner of the Mosaic ritual, is it not probable that they would have retained the other also, had it not been abrogated by the death of Christ? And would not their continued observance of the only sacrifices compatible with their profession of Christianity, afford as satisfactory evidence in favour of their Jewish origin as though they observed them both?

This is just the case with the Nestorian Christians. While they acknowledge Christ as the *final* offering for sin, they continue to present the other form of sacrifice—the peace-offerings—in accordance with the customs of the Jews.

"The peace-offering," says Cruden, "was of-

ferred to return thanks to God for his benefits, or to ask favours from him, or to satisfy any one's private devotion, or for the honour of God only. The *Israelites* offered them when they pleased, and there was no law that obliged them to do it. It was free to them to present what animals they would, provided they were such as it was allowed them to sacrifice. In these *sacrifices* no distinction was made, either of the age or sex of the victim, as was required in the *burnt sacrifices* and *sacrifice for sin*; the law only required that their victim should be without blemish.—Lev., xxxi. He that presented them came to the door of the tabernacle, put his hand upon the head of his victim, and killed it. The breast and the right shoulder belonged to the priest that performed the service; all the rest of the sacrifice belonged to him that presented it, and he might eat it with his family and friends as any other meat.\* But it must be eaten on the first or second day.—Lev., vii., 16.

No general description could better answer to the sacrifices† of the Nestorians, both as regards their object and the manner of performing them. They are usually offered to return thanks for God's benefits, or to obtain new favours from him; as, for instance, the recovery of sick friends, or their

\* Cruden, Calmet.

† The Syriac word which denotes these sacrifices is *Deukha*, in Castelli's Lexicon translated "victima sacrificium."—Phil., iv., 18. Heb., x., 12. Ps. xxvii., 6. Heb., xiii., 15. Pet., ii., 5.



own restoration to health. The animal is then usually slain before the door of the church, when a little of the blood is often put upon the door or lintels. The right shoulder and breast belong to the officiating priest of the church; though he does not always receive them, either through neglect of the person who offers the sacrifice, or, as some of the priests informed me, from a wish to avoid following the wicked example of Eli's sons, who made the sacrifices of the Temple an occasion of selfish gratification. Few, however, refuse their portion on this account. The skin is also given to the priest, as was required in the burnt-offerings.—Lev., vii., 8.

As all who are present may partake of the sacrifice, it is sometimes spoken of as a charitable offering; but it is often eaten by the person who offers it, together with his more immediate friends. It is regarded by all as an offering acceptable to God. In some cases the animal is slain before the door of the offerer, and a portion is sent to every house in the village; but this is usually in fulfilment of particular vows to that effect. The sacrifice is generally all eaten the same day it is killed; but I saw an instance at the house of the patriarch, in which it was not consumed till the evening of the second day, when they said it was necessary that it should all be eaten. The custom of sprinkling the blood upon the altar, and of burning a part of

the victim, is not strictly observed by this people ; but it is also omitted by the Jews of Ooroomiah and of other countries.

The Nestorians regard these sacrifices as a remnant of their former Jewish rites ; and those Jews, of whom I have inquired on the subject, say that “ they are a part of their own rites, which the Nestorians have retained since their conversion from Judaism, while they have departed from the law in more important matters.” The Nestorians sometimes offer sacrifices on the death of distinguished persons, supporting the practice by reference to 2 Maccabees, xii., 43, as they do their other sacrifices by reference to the Mosaic ritual and the practice of their forefathers.

The very statement that sacrifices are offered by Christians awakens surprise ; and we almost involuntarily exclaim, “ What ! are they Jews ? We thought they were Christians ; if they are so, whence these customs of Judaism ? They must be either Jews or heathen.” That the use of sacrifices among the Nestorians is not of heathen origin, is clearly evinced by the attending circumstances, and by their abhorrence of idolatry. It can be nothing but a remnant of Judaism retained by the *Nazareans*.

It is not simply the custom of offering sacrifices among the Nestorians, so much as their exact conformity to those of the Jews, in connexion with

other evidence of their identity with them, that affords the strong proof of their Israelitish origin. Sacrifices are common also among the heathen nations, and are practised by the Mohammedans, and even by the Armenians. But in all these cases, no proof can be furnished from the attendant circumstances, or the people themselves, by which either they or their sacrifices can be traced to a Hebrew origin. Nobody supposes that our Saxon forefathers were the posterity of Israel from their custom of offering sacrifices; remains of which were found as late as the seventh century in their Christian temples, in their practice of eating, on particular festivals in honour of God, those animals which they had formerly sacrificed to devils.

The sacrifices of the Armenians form a parallel case, at least so far as regards their heathen origin. But they have always, at least in modern times, a reference to the dead. Their origin, we are told by Nerses Shaorhali, on the authority of the Catholicos Isaac the Great, was as follows: When the Armenian nation embraced Christianity, under the preaching of St. Gregory Loosavoritch, the converted pagan priests came to him, and begged that he would provide for them some means of support, as the sacrifices, on which they formerly lived, were abolished. He accordingly ordered that a tenth of the produce of the fields should be theirs; and that, instead of their

former offerings to idols, the people should offer sacrifices to God in the name of the dead.\*

The same explanation, in substance, has been given to me by the modern Armenians; and it accords with the belief of those Jews who gave their unqualified testimony to the Hebrew origin of the Nestorian sacrifices.

Vows, or solemn promises made to God to do something for his glory, or as a token of gratitude for his favours, were very common under the Old Testament dispensation.—Judges, xi. Numbers, xxx. But in the New Testament there is no command whatever for observing them. Hence it is supposed that *vows* belong more to the ceremonial law than to the Gospel.† Some of the vows made by the Jews were so peculiar, that we should not expect to find them among any other people. Such was the vow of Hannah, by which the unborn Samuel was devoted to the Lord.—1 Sam., i., 11. But among the Nestorians, such vows, made under the same circumstances, are by no means uncommon. They pray that God would grant them the blessing which (as was the case among the Jews) lies nearest of all others to their hearts, and they solemnly promise to devote the child to the service of the Lord all the days of his life. If a son, they vow to educate him for the

\* Smith and Dwight's *Researches*, vol. i., p. 172, 3. Unthauragan, p. 242-252.

† Buck.

Church, that he may serve God in his temple; if a daughter, to give her marriage dowry to the Lord, or more rarely (as there have been cases in the mountains) devote her to celibacy and the service of the Church. When this is the form of the vow, the marriage dowry may be given as the price of her redemption, if she does not consent to the original terms of the vow.

The most intelligent priest in the employ of this mission (Priest Dunka) was devoted to the service of God by his mother, who, like Hannah, asked him of the Lord under a solemn vow. The right of redemption is acknowledged, as it was among the Jews. I saw in Tiyâry a priest who had lived for years under the vow of a Nazarite; allowing his hair and beard to grow, eating none but the coarsest food, and avoiding all ceremonial impurities, and whatever else is forbidden under this vow.\* A young Nestorian, who accompanied me in my late tour, on leaving home, made a vow that, if he were returned in safety, he would give a certain quantity of frankincense for the use of the church in the city of Ooroomiah, and a present of corresponding value to another church near his native village. At the same time, the young man's mother vowed that, if her son were safely returned, she would sacrifice a †sheep, and divide it among

\* The celibacy of the bishops and their abstinence from meat is regarded as a Nazaritish vow.

† A sacrifice made on account of a vow does not appear to dif-

the people of her village. Though special reference may have been had to the poor in the oblation, a piece was designed for every house in the village (about eighty in number); while a second animal was provided as a feast for their more immediate friends, as in the case of the returning prodigal. While vows are made on many and various occasions, the paying of them is regarded as matter of religious obligation.

FIRST-FRUITS are to this day presented to the Lord by the independent Nestorians, as they were among the Jews of old. The first ripe fruits of their fields, gardens, and vineyards are presented to God before the harvest is gathered; and, as their flocks comprise their chief wealth, they also set apart the first-fruits of the dairy as an offering to the Lord. A day is appointed as soon as the sheep have brought forth their lambs, when the milk of the whole flock is set apart for the support of the services of the sanctuary, or to feed the poor. Either in the form of milk, butter, or cheese, as suits the offerer, it is carried to the most central and principal church, and given for the service of the Lord. Several large schools are said to have been supported by these first-fruits and tithes, in former years. But now they are consumed by attendants and visitors at the church, or at public festivals. In other parts of the Nestorian country the *first-*fer from the peace-offering in its character, but here it is often attended with less formality.—Lev. xxii., 18, 21.

*fruits* have ceased to be offered, owing, as it is said, to poverty and oppression. In Tiyâry the practice is said to be general, though it may not be universal.

TITHES have ceased, as it is said, for the same reason ; nor would their existence be satisfactory testimony in the case, as they have been introduced among many other branches of the Church. But the offering of first-fruits to the Lord is believed to be a practice so peculiar, as to be identified at once as a remnant of Judaism.

THE SABBATH is regarded with a sacredness among the mountain tribes which I have seen among no other Christians in the East. I have repeatedly been told by Nestorians of the plain, that their brethren in the mountains would immediately kill a man for travelling or labouring upon the Christian Sabbath ; and there is abundant testimony to prove that this was formerly done, though it has ceased since the people have become acquainted with the practice of Christendom on this subject.

While in the mountains I made repeated inquiries concerning the observance of that remarkable statute of the Jews, which required that "whosoever doeth any work on the Sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death ;" and I was everywhere told that this statute had formerly been literally executed. Nor does there appear to be any mo-

tive for deception, since the practice is now disapproved of by all. There are said to be Nestorians now in Tiyâry who will not kindle a fire upon the Sabbath to cook their food; but their cold winters oblige them to do it for the sake of necessary warmth. On the plain there is much desecration of the Lord's day; but can the execution of the Mosaic ritual regarding the Sabbath, by the independent Nestorians, be accounted for in any other way than as a remnant of Judaism? Where, except among God's ancient people, to whom this peculiar law was immediately promulged, can we find a parallel case?

The Nestorians have also the "*preparation before the Sabbath*," commencing about three hours before sunset on Saturday, when all labour should cease except what is necessary to prepare for spending a quiet Sabbath.\* But the rule has in a measure fallen into disuse.

The SANCTUARY, or holy place of the Temple, was guarded among the Jews with no less strictness than the sacredness of the Sabbath; and the sanctuary of the church is regarded with much the same reverence by the Nestorian Christians. In speaking of the Nestorian churches, the Rev. Eli Smith remarks: "I observed that a door conducted into the sanctuary, and was about to enter. But the bishop commanded me, in an authoritative

\* See Jahn's *Archæology*, p. 442.



tone, to stop. I told him that I too was a priest; but he replied that that place can only be entered by fasting, and betrayed, by his manner, such an earnestness that I desisted."\* None but the consecrated ecclesiastics can enter this holy place; and they must not only abstain from all food and drink from the previous day, but also from sources of uncleanness mentioned in the ceremonial law, particularly from that forbidden by Moses (Exod., xix., 15) when he sanctified the people preparatory to his entering into the presence of God on Mount Sinai. Great care is taken to secure the holy place against the entrance of any unclean person or animal.

When the sanctuary has been polluted by the entrance of any unhallowed person, it must be consecrated anew before it can be used for the service of God. During the interval we have been permitted to enter this "holy place" of the Nestorian churches, but under no other circumstances. Not long ago a bishop was called to consecrate anew the sanctuary of the church in Ooroomiah, which had been entered by unhallowed feet in the night.

The "HOLY OF HOLIES" still exists among the Nestorians. A small recess in the wall of their church is called by that name. Christ having entered into this most holy place "once for all," a

\* Researches of Smith and Dwight, vol. ii., p. 211.

figure of the cross is kept there, and no one enters. Other parts of their churches bear the names of corresponding parts of the Jewish Temple. There is no parallel to this state of feeling among the other Christians of the East. I have repeatedly entered the sanctuary of the Armenian, Greek, and Jacobite Syrian churches, and that in the presence of their ecclesiastics, who made no objection. Whence is this difference of sentiment?

In the *construction* of their churches, the Nestorians attach much greater importance than the other Christians to the sanctuary, making it about half the size of the main body of the church or "*temple*" (*hekla*), as they call the place of general congregation. The Nestorians, also, have much the same feeling of strong attachment for their ancient churches that the Jews had for their Temple. I have frequently seen them go out of the way to pay them some mark of reverence; and when I inquired of some of the mountaineers how it was that they had so long preserved their independence, surrounded by enemies on every side, their reply was, "Our *churches* have saved us."\* Their churches, as well as the sanctuary, may not be entered by persons contaminated by any of the ceremonial pollutions of the Levitical code. This singular fact needs no comment; but the mention of it naturally leads to the consider-

\* Compare 1 Kings, viii., 20-49.

ation of some of the peculiar Jewish sentiments or regulations to which allusion is here made.

“Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord : because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean.”—Numbers, xix., 13. This is the sentiment of the Nestorians ; but, as in many other cases, it is modified by Christianity. *Baptism*, it is affirmed, purifies our bodies, so that no contamination is received from the dead body of a *Christian*. But if any person touch the dead body of a Jew, a Moslem, or a heathen, he is considered unclean, and must not touch any clean thing, or enter a church, till he has been duly purified with water. They are also careful to wash themselves after their own burial-service.

A woman may not enter the church until after the expiration of forty days from the birth of a male child, or a longer time if her child be a female. Seven days she is regarded as unclean, and may not touch any food or utensils except what are appropriated to her own separate use. On the eighth day her child may be baptized (an ordinance which, in the estimation of the Nestorians, takes the place of circumcision) ; and, after a prescribed purification of herself, her bed, and clothing, she may attend to her ordinary domestic duties, if her circumstances require it. But she

must not touch any "hallowed thing," "nor come into the sanctuary, until the forty days of her purifying be fulfilled." Circumstances of poverty may sometimes curtail the period of entire separation. But the last requisition is strictly adhered to; and, in case her child be a female, the period is extended to sixty days. A deduction has been made from the period required by the Jewish law in such cases, on account of the increased consideration given to females under the new dispensation; and in some places there is no difference observed on account of the child's sex. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper takes the place of the sacrifice required of the Hebrew mother, as it does of the atoning sacrifices and sin-offerings in all cases.

*Swine's flesh* and other meats prohibited by the Levitical code, are regarded by many of the Nestorians with little less abhorrence than they were by the Jews; though intercourse with other Christians is said to have effected quite a change in the sentiments of some on this subject. In the mountains the change is less felt than in Ooroomiah; and, though wild hogs are frequently killed, very few, if any, eat of their flesh. While I was with the patriarch, the change of sentiment on this subject was mentioned more than once as the effect of foreign influence. The innovation is said to have been very recent, as it is also felt only to a limited extent. We have the testimony of their

most intelligent men, that formerly their people would not so much as touch, and much less eat the flesh of swine, or other animals regarded as unclean by the ceremonial law. It is one of the accusations which the Nestorians bring against some of their Christian neighbours, that they eat unclean or forbidden food. Those who take more liberal views of the subject, feeling it necessary to justify their conduct in the eyes of their opposing brethren, quote the words of Christ: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man;" and also the command of God to Peter, to "kill and eat" of animals that were before regarded as unclean.—Acts, x., 10–16. The fact that the Moslems observe the same distinction respecting clean and unclean food, is no argument against our views; for it is well known that Mohammed borrowed many things from the Israelites. Now, as these specific regulations are confined to the Jewish and Moslem codes, the Nestorians must have derived them from the one or the other; and, as we have seen that they have many customs quite peculiar to the former, while they clearly are not descendants of the latter, is it not most rational to believe that their sentiments regarding forbidden food are also a remnant of Judaism? Their appeal is not to the Koran, but to the Mosaic ritual.

Their *fasts and festivals* bear a close analogy to those of the ancient Jews. Like the Pharisees, they "fast twice in a week," and they attach great

importance to these observances. These attachments the Nestorians themselves refer to a Hebrew origin. "In one instance," says my friend Mr. Stocking, "while I was hearing the bishop and priests read the New Testament, the difference between the Jewish and Gentile converts, arising from the strong attachment of the former to their Jewish customs, was alluded to; and one of the priests remarked to me that the analogy was quite similar between ourselves. 'We,' said he, 'were formerly Jews, and hold to our fasts; but you are Gentile Christians, and do not wish to adopt our customs.'"

*The Passover* they observe as their principal festival. They call it *Pascha*, after the original name of that ordinance as observed by the Jews. But the mode of the observance is modified by their faith in Christ. Regarding Him as the final pass-over, they substitute the emblems of his body and blood for the Paschal Lamb. In other respects they keep the festival much after the manner of the ancient Hebrews; and a like correspondence is observed throughout their fasts and festival occasions.

CIRCUMCISION, say the Nestorians, has been superseded by baptism; and they baptize their children on the eighth day, or at a subsequent period, but never before; and the ordinance is usually, but not uniformly, performed by immersion.

## CHAPTER VIII

**Physiognomy. — Names. — Tribes. — Government. — Avenger of Blood. — Cities of Refuge. — Sentiments regarding the Jews. — Various Proofs that they are a distinct People or an unmixed Race.**

THE PHYSIOGNOMY of the Nestorian Christians bears a close resemblance to that of the Jews of the country in which they dwell. Even the natives, who are accustomed to discriminate by the features between the various classes of people, are often unable to distinguish a Nestorian from a Jew; and I have taxed my own powers of discrimination with no better success. While Nestorians and Jews have been seated together before me, I have in vain endeavoured to find some distinguishing mark between them in the features or general contour of the face. The Jews, being more oppressed, I have sometimes fancied, wore a deeper shade of care in their countenance, and, in some cases, the complexion may be very slightly affected by their closer confinement in their mechanical and commercial pursuits, while the Nestorians are more abroad with their flocks or in the fields. But this does not afford a criterion by which we can distinguish between them; for, if a Jew has been exposed to the weather, we the more readily mistake him for a Nestorian; and so, if the latter has been confined to the house, we confound him as

readily with a Jew. Other members of this mission, and one English gentleman who visited us, have noticed this striking resemblance, saying of this or that Nestorian, "He has the most marked Jewish physiognomy I ever saw." On this subject my friend, the Rev. Mr. Homes, remarks: "One of the first things which suggested itself to me on seeing Nestorians, was their peculiar JEWISH PHYSIOGNOMY."

Their *names* are as strikingly Israelitish as their physiognomy. I have seen promiscuous circles of ten or twelve Nestorians, in which every individual had a Jewish name. From forty-five members of our seminary who were taken promiscuously, thirty-two had Jewish names found in the Bible. Others had received names of significant import, in accordance with the custom of the Jews, and such as are common among those of Ooroomiah.

The following are the names of the patriarch, of his five brothers, and other relations: Abraham (official name Simeon, Shimon); Zadok, also Absalom; Johanan, Benjamin, Isaac, Dunka (the same in signification as Kedemah, Gen., xxv., 15, i. e., Oriental, or the East); Nathan, also Napthali; Mark, also Ruel; Elias, Jonah, Joseph, Jesse, David, Solomon, Nathaniel, Urias, Eleazar, Phinehas, Japheth, Daniel, Peter, Ananias, Melchisedec, Ishmail, Gamaliel, Jonadab, Ezekiel. The bishops of this province: Elias or Elijah, Joseph, Johanan



or John, Gabriel, and Abraham (deceased). The names of all the patriarchs and prophets, and most, if not all, of the Jewish names mentioned in the Bible, are found among the Nestorians. While some of these names are found among other Christians, many of them appear to be peculiar to the posterity of Israel, or, at least, such as we should not expect to find except among Jews. The following are a specimen of the Hebrew names that occur among the Nestorian females: Miriam, Martha, Sarah, Rebecca, Rhoda, Elizabeth, Rachel, Tamor, Hannah, Hagar, Susannah.

These names, it may be well to apprise the reader, are, for greater convenience, given with the English pronunciation, and, to prevent mistake, they have been carefully compared with the same names in the Syrian Bible.

TRIBES. Most of the Nestorian Christians, like the ancient Israelites, live in separate tribes. We do not deem it essential to our main position, and shall not attempt to identify each one of the tribes separately. "The tribes of Israel," says Dr. Buchanan, "are no longer to be inquired after by name. The purpose for which they were divided into tribes was accomplished when the genealogy of the Messiah was traced to the stem of David. Neither do the Israelites themselves know certainly from what tribe they are descended." In the prophecies yet to be fulfilled, except those contain-

ed in the last chapter of Ezekiel, the ten tribes are always spoken of collectively. As a *body*, they are distinctly designated by the names Israel and Ephraim; and the rich blessings promised them in the word of God are to be received by them as *one* people. We shall therefore content ourselves for the present if we can identify them as a *whole*. When "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" shall be gathered together in one fold, if the Great Shepherd has designs to accomplish by their separation into their respective enclosures, a division will unquestionably be made. Still, the existence of the Nestorians, from time immemorial, in distinct tribes nearly or quite corresponding in number to those of ancient Israel, is a remarkable fact, and may furnish interesting testimony with regard to their origin. If we are able to identify one of these divisions with any one of the ten tribes, the inference naturally follows that the other divisions represent the remaining tribes, especially as there is internal evidence of their common origin.

As already intimated, few of the Nestorians can trace, either by tradition or otherwise, their lineal descent. Some, with a degree of vanity, have claimed connexion with the royal tribe, but have afterward acknowledged their ignorance on the subject.\* Others distinctly claim that they are the

\* The names of the tribes appear to be lost in the names of their districts.

posterity of the *ten tribes*, without attempting to trace their ancient divisions. But, in the midst of this general ignorance on the subject, the family of the patriarch, who of all others are the most likely to have preserved correct information regarding their genealogy, assure us most confidently that they know the particular tribe from which they are descended; and they make the assertion with so much apparent integrity of purpose, and with such attendant circumstances, as leave us no room to doubt their sincerity.

They claim descent from *Naphtali*; a claim that certainly savours little of vanity. If the assertion be not founded in truth, why do they not claim affinity with the sacerdotal or royal tribes? What possible motive can they have for courting an alliance with the humble son of a handmaid? The highest family in the nation setting up an unfounded claim to a connexion with the most humble, with one of the least distinguished of all their ancient tribes! With the pride of ancestry which especially characterizes every distinguished Oriental, there is a strong temptation for them to disavow this humble connexion altogether, and substitute for it one of more honourable name. The records on which they mainly relied for proofs in the case, were, together with a large quantity of manuscripts, lost in conveying them across the Zâb at high water about sixty years ago. But, as

this occurred so recently, and during the lifetime of some now on the stage, there is little room for mistake in the case. Either the story must be altogether a fabrication, to which all have connived, or it must be based upon proof which was satisfactory at least to those most concerned. As there is no conceivable motive for attempting such an imposition, we are left to the fair conclusion that the patriarch's family are what they profess to be, the descendants of the tribe of Naphtali. The other Nestorian tribes sustaining about the same relation to this and to each other that the Hebrew tribes relatively held, it is natural to infer that they all had a common descent from the stock of Israel, as their high-priest appears to have had from one of the ten tribes. This idea derives additional support from the circumstance, that their chiefs or nominal heads retain the Hebrew appellation *Melek* or *Mālek*, which designated the royal head of the nation of Israel. This term, it is true, has found its way into other Oriental languages; but I know of no other people in the East with whom it is in common use, to designate their civil head, as it was among the Hebrews, and is now among the Nestorians.

*Government.* There is also much in the government of the independent Nestorians which resembles that of the ancient Hebrews. Their *ma-leks*, it is true, have little more than the name of

their office, and the people are really "without a prince" or any civil head. Their form of government partakes much of the theocracy of the ancient Jewish code, when "the high-priest was at the head of all religious affairs, and was the ordinary judge of all difficulties that belonged thereto, and even of the general *justice and judgment* of the Jewish nation."\*

This is just the relation sustained by the Nestorian patriarch to the independent tribes. He presides on important occasions in the judicial assembly of their elders;† and he inflicts punishment for civil offences by the several forms of excision or excommunication in use among the Jews; cutting off the offender, not merely from the privileges of the church, but from civil society and all the rights of citizenship. His authority is only that which, as the anointed high-priest of his people, he derives from God. But its power is felt, as I had occasion to notice in the case of a man of some rank in Tiyâry, who was cut off from all intercourse with the people, so that I was obliged to go a day's journey out of my way to avoid communication with him.

The AVENGER OF BLOOD among the independent Nestorians is the minister of justice for capital crimes, as was the case among the Hebrews. "The execution of the punishment which (in Gen.,

\* Calmet. † Compare Jahn's *Archæology*, p. 299. *Ib.*, p. 318.

ix., 6) was decreed against the homicide, devolved on the brother or other nearest relative of the person whose life had been taken away. In case he did not slay the guilty person, he was considered *infamous*.\* This is just the state of things among the Assyrian tribes of Nestorians at this day. An indelible stain marks the character of the person who does not avenge the death of a relative; and, so strong is the force of this long-established custom, that even the precepts of the Gospel fail to overcome it.

CITIES OF REFUGE† were appointed by the Hebrew legislator to prevent abuses in this summary manner of punishing the guilty. These cities were the property of the priests and Levites, and were required to be numerous and accessible. Among the Nestorians, the *churches* in most respects correspond to this description; and they are the constituted *cities of refuge*, where the manslayer may flee for security, and safely remain till the elders shall decide on his case. If then the man be found guilty of wilful homicide, he is delivered over to the *avenger of blood* to be put to death; if not wilful, a ransom is fixed by the judges, or the affair settled to the satisfaction of the avenger of blood (Ex., xxi., 30), and his life is spared.

\* Jahn's Archæology, p. 326.

† *Ib.*, p. 327. Deut., xix., 1-13. Num., xxxv., 9-29.

There are many other points in the civil policy of the Nestorians, upon which I need not dwell, that appear to be derived directly from the Mosaic law, which is, in fact, their only civil code. It is their adherence to this code that forms the ground of evidence in support of their Hebrew origin; and hence a semblance of the same practices among other Orientals detracts very little from the validity of this testimony. Let it be shown that any other people not related to the Jews as really follow the precepts of the Mosaic law, and appeal to it as the basis of their civil jurisprudence, and we will admit that there may be nothing in the government of the independent Nestorians indicative of their Israelitish origin; but, till then, we must regard these customs as affording strong circumstantial evidence in its favour.

*The sentiments and feelings of the Nestorians in respect to the Jews* is a circumstance which requires more than a passing notice; as very different conclusions may be drawn from it by different individuals, unless it be traced to its proper source. When viewed in its true light, it bears testimony to their common origin.

That the settled antipathy of the Nestorians to the Jews is evidence that they are allied to them by a common ancestry, may at first seem a little paradoxical. Such is the light in which I formerly regarded it. But is it not a well-known fact,

that between individuals and parties that have violently severed the bonds of a former union, there exists a deeper animosity than can be found under any other circumstances? Who has not seen the most bitter rancour seize upon hearts once united by long-cherished ties, when driven asunder by jarring discord or unyielding controversy? With good men, pursuing a common object, and even with the blood-bought Church of Christ, how lamentably has this principle of our fallen nature been exemplified! It was exemplified in the case of the Jews and Samaritans. The latter were, in part at least, the descendants of Israel, and they had, as a people, been instructed in the religion of the Hebrews. On the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, they proposed to join them in rebuilding the Temple and walls of Jerusalem. But their proffered aid was rejected; and from that time we find them throwing every possible hinderance in the way of the Jews, and finally erecting a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, which, they maintained, was "the place where men ought to worship." So bitter was their enmity in the time of our Saviour, that it was matter of great surprise that he, a Jew, should even ask drink of a woman of *Samaria*; for "the *Jews*," we are told, "had *no dealings* with the *Samaritans*." On another occasion, the latter were going to refuse the most common rites of



hospitality to our Lord because his face was as though he would go to *Jerusalem*. And again, "Thou art a *Samaritan*, and hast a devil," was the bitter invective of the enraged Jews.

But little less hostile is the feeling existing between the Jews and Nestorians. "What, you eat bread with a Jew?" was the recent language of a Nestorian bishop to one of our number. Neither will partake of hospitalities with the other, which both would readily share with a Mussulman, their worst enemy. And all this antipathy is cherished, while they have the strong bond of their common oppressions and a common language to unite them together. Why is it thus? History furnishes an answer. Why were the Jews the most implacable enemies the Church ever had? And why was their worst malice vented against the converts from Judaism? The cases are precisely parallel, and the answer is the same. We have only to keep in mind the principle with which we started, the *enmities of dis severed union*, and go back to their first heart-burning controversies on the subject of Christianity, when, after sore collisions on points of the most vital interest, they were violently torn asunder, leaving their lacerated wounds to inflame and rankle unhealed. Nor need we go back. We have only to see the Jews and Nestorians together, and hear their mutual recriminations—the one charging the other with apostacy

from their ancient religion, and the latter accusing the former as the guilty rejectors of the Messiah—and we shall be at no loss how to account for the existing antipathy between the Nestorians and Jews. I was recently present at just such an interview between them; and it required all the address I was master of to pacify and make them treat each other somewhat like brethren. When this was effected, they conversed freely together (though with occasional aspersion) on the subject of their former fraternal relation as *sons of Israel*; a relation so fully recognised by both parties as to form the basis of some of their most pointed remarks. Such enmity is clearly intimated by some of the prophets, as *Zech., xi., 14.* In this passage the context connects it with *Christianity* as the occasion. Having given a remarkable prediction of the Messiah, the prophet proceeds: “Then I cut asunder my other staff, even Bands, *that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.*”

*They are a peculiar people.* The relation of the Nestorian Christians to the surrounding nations is in itself a circumstance of no little interest. But it assumes a magnified importance in this connexion, both on account of the evidence furnished by the fact as indicative of their early ancestry, and as proof that they are to this day a distinct and unmixed race. Were there no evidence of this, it might be objected that, although it is clear

that they have remains of Judaism and other evidence of a relation to Israel, yet only a part of them may have a Hebrew origin. But their relative situation and their civil and religious policy, together with their peculiar character and language, evince the futility of this objection.

Their geographical position is remarkably adapted to their preservation as a distinct people. I speak now particularly of the main body of them in the recesses of almost inaccessible mountains, where they are seldom visited by any other people. Though surrounded by Persians, Turks, Koords, Arabs, Armenians, Jews, and Yezidees, they have very little intercourse with either, and admit none into their country except on particular business, and then only such as are well known, or who come with the sanction of their chief men. Their secluded retreat is so walled around by adamantine barriers, and is so easily defended, that their enemies have never been able to scale their mountain ramparts; so that they have remained for ages almost shut out from the world around them. Not only is the principal part of the Nestorians shut out by physical barriers from the people around them, but their civil condition requires them to remain peculiarly distinct. It is perhaps to this, as much as to the nature of their country, that they owe their present independence, in the midst of numerous and powerful enemies; while, on the

other hand, their seclusion and exclusive policy naturally repel any attempt on the part of others to form a connexion with them.

While these circumstances operate to keep the independent tribes in particular entirely free from any foreign admixture, the religious sentiments of the whole people operate less effectually in preserving them, as a body, equally distinct. With the *Moslems* they cannot intermarry if they would; nor would individuals of the former become Nestorians, even if they had the disposition to do so, as nothing but death would atone for such an act. The Armenians are the only people in this vicinity with whom they can have intermixed; but, as they have images or pictures in their churches, to which the Nestorians have a great abhorrence, they are considered by the latter little better than idolaters. Consequently, they form no alliances, or, if they occur at all, they are certainly extremely rare; as much so, at least, as foreign marriages were among the ancient Hebrews. In every case that has come to my knowledge where Armenians have asked for Nestorian females, the high ecclesiastics have peremptorily forbidden the purposed connexion. The following extract from the journal of Mr. Stocking, of this mission, presents a case in point: "A petition was brought to the bishop from one of the principal Armenians residing in the village, requesting his permission that a Nestorian

girl of that village might be united in marriage to his son. The bishop gave a decided answer in the negative. He said the same request had been made to him in the city, with an offer of a sum of money; but that he had refused the application, telling the man who brought it that the money and its owner might perish together, that he would never consent to his people becoming Armenians." The Jews also testify that the Nestorians are as careful as themselves not to form alliances with others.

The various general traits in their character which tend to prevent an amalgamation with the people around them, are circumstances upon which I need not dwell, except as they are in part incidentally developed in their peculiar rites and customs. It is sufficient in this connexion to say, in general terms, that the Nestorians, being strongly attached to each other, and regarding themselves as a distinct and peculiar people, are decidedly averse to any foreign alliances.

Their peculiar *language* has an obvious tendency to preserve them as a distinct people. I need no more than barely allude to this here, in proof that they are the unmingled progeny of a race entirely different from all around them except the nominal Jews. These, we have seen, use, in common with the Nestorians, a medium of intercourse entirely different from the other languages of this country.

Their entire freedom from, and great abhorrence of, idolatry, furnishes strong circumstantial evidence of their Israelitish origin. I acknowledge that it is insufficient proof by itself; but, in connexion with more positive evidence, it is worthy of particular attention. The Jews all over the world, so far as we know, are entirely free from any appearance of idolatry, though guilty of almost every other sin. Their universal rejection of idols is a very remarkable fact, which carries with it indubitable evidence of a special interposition of Divine Providence in their behalf. We are also expressly told that the children of Israel shall abide many days, or a long time, "*without an image*:" a prophecy to which I shall have occasion to recur more particularly at another time.

If the Nestorians were idolaters, would not this militate against our position that they are the children of Israel? How remarkable, then, that they alone, of all the churches of the East, are entirely free from the least appearance of idol-worship. While all of these churches are filled with pictures, they have none. They bow their knees before no likeness of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath; and, while the other Christians pay their homage to the consecrated host which is daily held up for their adoration, the Nestorians observe almost a scriptural simplicity in their sacramental rites.

## CHAPTER IX.

**Social and domestic Customs.—Forms of Salutation.—Hospitality.—Regard for the Poor.—Entertainments.—Dress.—Ornaments.—Espousals.—Marriage.—Children.—Their Occupations.—The same as those of the ancient Israelites.**

THERE is much in the social and domestic habits of the Nestorians so entirely similar to what we find among God's ancient people, that a particular account of them would differ but little from a correct transcript of Hebrew archæology. But, as there are few customs mentioned in the Bible which cannot find a parallel, or, at least, a tolerable similitude, among some of the various nations of the East, it will avail little, in the view of those whose minds are fortified by preconceived opinions regarding the ten tribes, even were I to show that *all* these customs find a parallel among the Nestorian Christians. On the other hand, it is believed that in the estimation of those who examine the subject candidly, the proof that we have already adduced, together with considerations yet to be presented, will most clearly demonstrate the identity of the Nestorians with the lost tribes of Israel. I shall, therefore, pass over this source of evidence in a very cursory manner, and devote to it only a few pages; although it might, by a more able pen and in another connexion, be expanded into an in-

teresting volume. But, while the existence of certain customs and rites may not of itself prove the Nestorians to be Israelites, the absence of such rites and customs might go far to show that they were not Israelites. If the Nestorians are of Jewish origin, we expect to find Jewish traits; and these we shall now examine.

Perhaps I cannot better introduce this part of my subject than by a short extract from the journal of the Rev. Mr. Perkins: "As I was at work in our little garden," he writes, "the boys belonging to our school passed along and saluted me in their patriarchal style by saying, 'Allah covet yavil,' 'May God give you strength.' It is deeply interesting to see how much there is that is truly primitive among the Nestorians. We meet with it in their household furniture, in their agricultural utensils, in their instruments of music, but, most of all, in their modes of salutation. When two persons meet, they mutually salute each other by saying, 'Peace be with you;' and the other replies, 'Your company is welcome.' When a guest leaves a house, he says, 'May God grant you increase, may your days be prosperous;' and the other replies, 'May God be with you.' When one puts on a new garment, enters a new house, or purchases a new article, his friend congratulates him by saying, 'May God bless your garment,' 'May God bless your house,' &c. If you do a



Nestorian a kindness, or wish him prosperity, he says, in thanking you, 'May God give you the kingdom of Heaven.' When one enters upon any undertaking, he says, 'If the Lord will, I shall accomplish it;' 'In the strength of the Lord, I will learn this book,' &c.

The *forms* of their salutations, I may add, are no less primitive than the phraseology in which they are expressed. We see the same ardent gesticulations, prostrations, falling upon the neck, the same kissing of the lips, cheeks, beard, and hands; and the same weeping for joy on the return of long-absent friends.

Their *hospitality*\* to the stranger, and especially to their own people, is quite as primitive as the salutation with which they meet him. His every want is promptly supplied; water is brought for his feet; food is immediately prepared and set before him, and every provision is made for his comfort and repose. He goes not from house to house, but, having found a shelter under one roof, he would do injustice to his kind host to leave it for another lodging in the same village. He salutes the house on entering; his peace rests upon it; and he departs with a blessing. I think I never saw the expressions of hospitality in such primitive simplicity as exhibited among the Nestorian Christians. Nor is their general kindness to the poor

\* Compare Jahn's *Archæology*, p. 196-7.

and suffering less remarkable. None are turned empty away; and those who have the means often lay up extra stores for the poor, and for months together provide them food and shelter.—Lev., xix., 34. Deuteronomy, x., 18, 19.

Their *entertainments* are in the true Hebrew style. The guests are invited by a servant, who is often\* sent round the second time when the feast is ready. Each one is seated by the master of the feast according to rank, the more honourable being invited to come up higher, while the others give him place; the governor of the feast presides; the social bowl circulates; all dip their hands into the dish, and occasionally one dips a sop and gives to another (a special kindness). They sit upon the carpet or floor, and lean forward, eating their plain food in a primitive manner.

At their joyous festivals they have music and dancing; the tabret and viol, and David's harp, and the voice of singing. They observe their new moons and Sabbaths or solemn feasts. In *mourning*, they often cast dust upon their heads, rend their garments, clothe themselves in sackcloth or coarse attire, and sit in the ashes or go to the grave to weep there.

In their *dress*, too, there is a striking conformity to that of the Jews about them; and, while their loins are girded about, their staff is in their hand,

\* Matt., xxii., 3.

and their feet are shod with sandals. These last are sometimes made of hair, and at others of raw hide or leather, and little more than cover the sole of the foot.

Among their *ornaments* are earrings and nose-jewels; chains and mufflers, or spangled ornaments; headbands and stomachers; bracelets on their hands, rings on their fingers, and plating of the hair; though in the mountains there is more of the modest simplicity of the days of Sarah.

Their *employments* are those of early antiquity. We see the damsels coming daily to draw water, with their pitchers on their shoulders, gleaning wheat in the fields in the time of harvest, or, like Rachel, tending their father's flocks; while the virtuous woman seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She layeth her hand to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff, both being literally held in the hand. Women are seen grinding at a mill,\* or braying wheat with a pestle in a mortar to separate the hull,† or churning milk (not cream) to bring forth butter, or gathering the grass, "which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven;" making bottles of skins or

\* They also have water-mills for grinding, made in the most simple manner. These have but a single wheel, and the revolving stone and wheel are attached to the same perpendicular shaft.

† The wheat is pounded in a large stone mortar, and the hull is only separated with great difficulty; but it is far more difficult to divest a fool of his folly.—Prov., xxvii., 22.



leather to contain the wine which has been trodden in the wine-press by the feet. The vineyards, the threshing-floors, the winnowing of wheat while the chaff is driven before the wind; the threshing instruments having teeth; the reaping and the shouting of the harvest; the turning the rivers of water to fertilize their fields; planting of willows and other trees by the watercourses; the ploughs; the pruning-hooks; the lodge in the gardens of cucumbers or melons; their food and drink, and the time of their meals; their domestic animals, beehives, and sheepfolds; their dwellings and amusements; their walking and sleeping upon the house-tops, and many other customs and peculiarities, are equally common to the ancient Israelites and the modern Nestorians.

It would surpass our limits to speak of other usages which might have been named in this connexion, and much more to dwell upon them at length. But there are a few customs, particularly those relating to the marriage union, and to their pastoral life, which ought not to be passed over in this cursory manner.

Among the Jews, the father of a family selects wives for his sons and husbands for his daughters. If a son had a preference for any person as his wife, he asked the father to obtain her from *her* father. But the father could not give the daughter in marriage without the consent of the brothers.\*

\* Jahn's *Archæology*, p. 162.

These are the very rules observed by the Nestorians at the present day. No young man thinks of making a marriage-contract for himself. In case the father is dead, the eldest brother takes the father's place. Where the intended bride lives at a distance, the matter is sometimes intrusted to some faithful servant or agent, as was done by Abraham in relation to his son Isaac. This event was remarkably illustrated by the history of a marriage that took place a short time since among the Nestorians in the mountains. Indeed, there was such a remarkable coincidence of names and circumstances, that it seemed like acting over again that most interesting part of sacred history.

The Nestorian *patriarch Abraham* (for this is his name, Simeon or Shimon being only official), who was in the place of a father to his younger brother *Isaac*, being desirous of procuring a wife for his foster son, sent his most trusty steward to a distant part of the country to obtain one from among his own people. The servant took with him jewels and raiment for the future wife of Isaac, and presents for her near relatives. He was no less prosperous than the servant of his master's namesake, the ancient patriarch Abraham. But, though I became acquainted with all the parties in the case, I must leave the reader's imagination to fill up some of the incidents. Only let him substitute *mules* for *camels* (which are not used in this

mountainous country), and I may refer to the close of the 24th chapter of Genesis for the sequel. The damsel was brought to the house of this modern patriarch, and "Isaac took her, and she became his wife, and he loved her."

The marriage-contract, or, rather, the dowry, having been settled, the parties are *betrothed*, when the damsel becomes the *espoused wife* of her *future* husband. But it is not usually till an interval of ten or twelve months, and often not till after several years have transpired, that the marriage is fully consummated. Still the act of espousal is more than a formal contract or agreement. It is regarded as a solemn rite; and although there is no intercourse between the bride and bridegroom, not even so much as an interchange of conversation, they are nevertheless considered and spoken of as husband and wife.\* The husband could not for any cause put away his espoused wife without giving her a bill of divorcement; and any infidelity on the part of the bride was punished with the same rigour as if they had been actually married.† This mutual obligation was a sequence of the espousal, which is often not solemnized till after the agreement has been entered into by the parents of the parties. The betrothment is celebrated with nearly the same religious solemnity as in a marriage. A feast is prepared at the house of the

\* Jahn's *Archæology*, p. 164. † *Matt.*, i., 18-20. *Luke*, ii., 5.

damsel's father, and, with all due formality, a ring is consecrated by a bishop or priest, and presented by the young man to his intended spouse, through some discreet matron who has the confidence of all parties.\* If the ring is accepted by the damsel, she puts it upon her finger, and from that time becomes his betrothed wife. At the same time, the affianced husband pays a sum of money and a quantity of grain† (wheat, rice, or barley), which may be regarded in the light of purchase-money.‡ It is never money alone, but money and provisions that he pays; and this always at the time when the parties are betrothed. This first payment, or purchase-money, is distinct from the present that is given at the marriage.

This conformity of the practice of the Nestorians to that of the ancient Israelites is made very obvious by a reference to the third chapter of Hosea: a portion of the sacred volume hitherto obscure, but now most clearly illustrated. During the period of probation, from the betrothment to the marriage, the espoused wife receives protection and occasional provisions, or other favours from her *affianced* husband, however distant the consummation of their conjugal union.

\* Among the modern "Jews, the bridegroom puts a ring on the finger of his bride, saying, by this ring thou art my *spouse*, according to the custom of Moses and the children of Israel."—Bib. Antiquities, vol. i., p. 150.

† Hosea, iii., 2.

‡ See Smith and Dwight's *Researches*, vol. ii., p. 198.

The festivals of the wedding, when it finally takes place, usually continue through a whole week (Gen., xxix., 27. Judges, xiv., 17, 18); the *companions* of the bridegroom are in attendance, and the bridal procession is conducted with great display. The bride, decked in all her ornaments and covered with a rich veil, is conducted to her new home in the midst of shoutings and rejoicings, "the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride." Her new friends, who meet her at the gate, throw over her handfuls of raisins and other fruit or grain, often mingled with small coin, in token of their desire that she may be fruitful and prosperous. This custom is also observed among the modern Jews. The same reproach is attached to both *celibacy* and *sterility* as among the ancient Hebrews, unless, as in some very rare cases, the former is in consequence of a religious vow. In other cases marriage is deemed a duty.

Chastity is a virtue which is general among the Nestorian females; and reference is always had to the peculiar custom among the ancient Hebrews alluded to in Deut., xxii., 15-20. A numerous offspring, and particularly of sons, is much desired; and happy is he who bringeth "tidings to the father, saying, a man-child is born unto thee, making him very glad."

Infants, immediately after birth, are washed in cold water; and, after being rubbed all over with



a quantity of fine salt, are wrapped in swaddling-clothes (usually a quantity of old rags): a custom alluded to by the prophet Ezekiel (xvi., 4): "Thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all;" "neither wast thou washed in water." Children are nursed by their mothers till they are two and a half or three years of age. They are nursed while reposing in their cradle, which is just high enough to enable them to obtain their nourishment, while the mother sits upon the floor, with her side towards the cradle. The daughters, at a very early age, are sold into wedlock, while the sons and their children remain under the roof of their father, who is the patriarch of the whole household. In case of the father's death, the eldest son succeeds to his place, and inherits, by right of primogeniture, much of his father's authority. In case the daughters remain unmarried on the death of their father, the brothers dispose of them, and receive the dowry for themselves. The degrees of consanguinity within which matrimony is considered lawful, being settled by Christian councils, we must not, in this particular, look for the customs of antiquity. In most respects, the whole domestic economy bears a more striking analogy to that of the ancient Israelites than I have seen among any other people in the East.

There is also in their occupations and mode of living a very close conformity to the state of

the ten tribes at the time of their captivity. Some of the latter cultivated their fields and vineyards; and we have seen that this is the case also with many Nestorians, and that they do it in the same manner, and with the same utensils. But in their character as shepherds the comparison is yet more remarkable. When the Hebrews went into Egypt, they were a community of shepherds; and, having a district assigned to them which was particularly adapted to the sustenance of their flocks, they retained this character during the four centuries of their sojourn there.

On their arrival upon the borders of the Promised Land forty years after, we find them greatly increasing their flocks, and preparing to lead in their new abodes their early pastoral occupations on a large scale. To say nothing of later acquisitions from the conquered Canaanites, we find them taking from the Midianites alone more than six hundred and seventy thousand sheep.\* There was also a strong desire manifested, particularly by some of the ten tribes, to secure a good grazing country for their numerous flocks, "*because they had a very great multitude of cattle.*" Hence it appears that the Israelites, though they paid some necessary attention to agriculture, were, as a people, a nation of shepherds. Their flocks comprised their chief wealth. At a later day we find the two and a half tribes on the east of the

\* Numbers, xxxi., 32.

Jordan, extending their borders to obtain a wider range for their increasing flocks ; to which they added, from the Hagarites alone, no less than two hundred and fifty thousand sheep at one time.\*

These tribes, as we have seen, were the first to be carried away into Assyria ; and we have also seen that they and the other tribes were placed together in a region so peculiarly adapted to pasturage, that a large portion of it was called Gozan, or *pasture*. Were they placed there without their flocks ? Was it not a more important object with the kings of Assyria to enrich their country by stocking it with many thousands of sheep, than it was to obtain the Israelitish shepherds alone, and let them abandon their invaluable flocks ? and especially when they were to occupy a region where they could not subsist themselves, and much less be a source of profit to their new masters without them. Moreover, how were they to subsist during their long journey without their flocks ? Some have objected to the account of the inspired historian, that "*all Israel was carried away,*" on the ground that sustenance could not have been found for such a multitude, either during the journey or on arriving at their new habitations ; and the objection might seem very plausible if they went without their flocks ; but, with them, there could be no want of food. If we are to credit

\* 1 Chron., v.

the account of Esdras\* that they were a year and a half in making the journey, the necessity for taking their flocks with them to afford sustenance to their families was more imperious. Having myself followed in the track of the captive Israelites over the vast plain of Mesopotamia, and across the Tigris into the central highlands of Assyria; lodging in the black tents of the Arabs, and seeing how slowly they move from place to place with their immense flocks, which everywhere afford the chief sustenance to their families, it appeared evident that the children of Israel might have travelled in the same way without serious difficulty. As the whole route, by varying the course, affords abundant pasturage, the Israelites had only to move on leisurely, and avail themselves of the most favourable season for crossing the different parts of the country, when they would safely reach their new home. Although a year or more might elapse, neither they nor the animals that furnished their support would suffer very greatly from the long journey; while the means of sustenance would be at hand on their

\* 4th Esdras, xiii., 45. A careful comparison of this account, in the original, must satisfy any one that it can refer to nothing else than the captivity by Shalmaneser, 2 Kings, xvii., 6; as we are expressly told that they crossed the Euphrates. As the Tigris unites with this river, it may have been included under the same name. The country *Arsaret* may be the same as *Hattareh* or *Hartareh* (i. e., Halah), or *Ararat*.

arrival, and they would soon form an attachment to their new mountain abodes.

Having seen that the Israelites followed, in a great measure, the life of shepherds until the time of their captivity, and that they took their flocks with them into the land of their exile, where a region adapted only to pasturage was assigned them, we shall naturally expect to find them still pasturing their sheep upon the mountains, as most of the Nestorian Christians do at the present day. It is in connexion with the fact that the ten tribes came to this very region in the character of keepers of sheep, that an importance is attached to the same character and practice in the Nestorian tribes. While their fixed habitations, their solid stone houses, their large villages, their ancient churches, and their long-cherished associations with their adopted and secure home, forbid the idea of their being a migratory people, we find a large portion of them retiring to *Zozan*, and spending from six to nine months in the year under the tabernacles while tending their flocks upon the mountains. Their chief wealth consists in sheep and goats, which furnish them with food and clothing. There may you see the good shepherd calling his own sheep by name, leading them "into green pastures and beside the still waters," and "carrying the lambs in his bosom," or "seeking that which is lost." If, in their more exposed

situations, the enemy surprises them and steals some of their favourite sheep, they stand prepared to redeem their loss by a larger reprisal from the fold of the invader. While they do not seek to extend their boundaries by aggressive warfare, they manifest the same fearless spirit that was so characteristic of their Israelitish ancestors; and they are no less feared by the tribes among whom they live. Nor is it surprising, when we look at the inaccessible nature of their country, and their remarkably isolated condition, that they retain to the present day so much of their primitive Hebrew character.

A bond of union like that of their Jewish origin, appears to have operated in preserving their unity and primitive simplicity of character. At the same time, their preservation as a distinct people, in their peculiar circumstances, affords proof of the existence of some bond of union like that of their common relation to Israel, as really as the same fact is evinced in the history of the Jews throughout the world.

Y

## CHAPTER X.

## The Conversion of the Ten Tribes to Christianity.

THAT the lost tribes of Israel are now, and have long been, within the pale of the Christian Church, may awaken general surprise, if not incredulity. It is therefore highly important, in order to obtain a candid decision of our main question, that this part of the subject receive a careful examination.

But why should we be incredulous as to the fact of their conversion having already occurred, since the pen of inspiration has predicted that event? If in imagination we have been accustomed to regard them Jews adhering to Judaism, it is natural that we should associate with the name the idea of inveterate enmity to the Messiah. But what is the evidence that such is their condition? Should the objection be made, that "blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," its applicability is admitted in the case of many of the lost sheep of the Jewish fold, and is true, also, in comparison with the greater light which is yet to be revealed with regard to all. But the same apostle also informs us that, as in the days of Elias, God had reserved to himself seven thousand who had not

bowed the knee unto Baal : “ Even so, then, at this present time, also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace,” while only a part, “ *the rest,*” were blinded.—Rom., xi., 4-7. If all the rich blessings promised in connexion with their conversion have not, as yet, been realized, it is because the change has been more nominal than real ; or, if their graces once flourished, they have become dormant under the thousand untoward influences that have rolled in upon them.

In the following chapter we shall endeavour to place this point in its true light, and remove all apprehension of the failure of one iota of what God has promised. In the mean time, let us, unbiassed by preconceived opinions, proceed to examine the evidence to be adduced in support of the position, that the ten tribes received the Gospel in the apostolic age of the Church.

I. Some of them were present, and heard the Gospel on the day of Pentecost. “ *Parthians and Medes*” are the first mentioned among the Jews who were then assembled at Jerusalem, “ out of every nation under Heaven.” Parthia, at that period, comprised the country of *Adiabene*, or that part of Assyria where the greater part of the ten tribes then resided. The speech of Agrippa, already quoted, as well as ancient history, establishes the locality of ancient Parthia : “ If your fellow-tribes in Adiabene,” says the king, “ would come



to your assistance, yet the *Parthians* will not let them." A part of these tribes also lived in the cities of the *Medes*. They probably had heard of the "fame of Jesus, that was everywhere spread abroad." Perhaps the "wise men from the East," who were led by "his star" to Bethlehem, the birthplace of the Saviour, were sons of Israel.

The Nestorians have a tradition, that the magi who visited our Saviour went from Ooroomiah, a city of the *Medes*. This is supported by certain predictions of Zoroaster,\* the leader of the magi, and a native or resident of Ooroomiah. According to the *Zendavesta* and Abulpharagius, he foretold the coming of a personage corresponding to the character of the Messiah, and charged his disciples to hasten, at the appearance of "his star," to pay to this "mysterious child" their devout adorations. "He," said the venerable seer, "is the Almighty Word which created the heavens."† At a later period in the life of our Saviour they may have seen him, in their visits to Jerusalem, at the great festivals, which they were accustomed to observe. But, however this may be, it is certain that Jews from the country where the ten tribes then lived, were present on the memorable day of Pentecost.

\* The Nestorians say that the prophet Zoroaster was a disciple of Jeremiah: a tradition that derives support from chronology. Prideaux, with good reason, thinks Zoroaster was a disciple of some one of the prophets, if not himself a Jew.

† See Burder's *Orient. Cus.*, vol. i., p. 18.

Since the return of the captives from the Babylonish exile, the term Jews has often been applied indiscriminately to the tribe of Judah and to the other branches of the family of Israel. The multitudes assembled at Jerusalem, and the thousands converted on that day, were, without doubt, composed, in part at least, of the ten tribes. And, after receiving due instruction from the apostles, with whom they "continued with one accord in the Temple," would they not carry the glad tidings to their countrymen?

II. The apostles and primitive disciples made it their *first* business to preach the Gospel "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The twelve and the seventy had been commissioned to preach to them only; and, although the last command of the Saviour extended to the whole world, so exclusively were their thoughts upon their own nation, to whom "pertained the covenant and the promises," that it required a miracle, with a special command, to induce them to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. It was esteemed "an unlawful thing for a man, that is, a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." And they were all greatly astonished "that on the Gentiles, also, was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."\* But, at the time of the conversion of Cornelius, the disciples had been "scattered abroad" seven or

\* Acts, x.

eight years. "They went *everywhere*, preaching the word" to the most distant of their Jewish brethren, but to no others obviously, since it was then regarded as an unpardonable offence to hold intercourse with men who were uncircumcised. Where did they go? Would not the converts from the country of the captive Israelites desire the Gospel to be preached to their brethren in Assyria, or *Parthia* and *Media*? Philip went and preached with great success among their former enemies, the Samaritans. Had none of the disciples any compassion for the ten tribes? We have seen that they were not ignorant of their situation; and that some of the devout Jews from their country were at Jerusalem at the time, or just before, the disciples were scattered abroad, which was the same year with the crucifixion, and not long after the day of Pentecost.

If we had no other proof, these considerations should satisfy us that the ten tribes had the Gospel preached to them almost immediately after the great Pentecostal assemblage at Jerusalem. But we are not dependant upon this source of proof alone. We find the names of the very disciples who preached in that region on the pages of numerous historians, establishing, beyond a doubt, the position, that to the ten tribes the Gospel was preached early in the apostolic age of the Church.

Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Ambrose, Nicepho-

rus, Baronius, Natalus, and others, testify that the apostle Thomas preached in Parthia and other Eastern countries. Natalus Alexander sums up the testimony of the ancients by saying that Thomas preached the Gospel to the Parthians, Medes, Persians, &c.—Hist. Eccl., iv., p. 32.

Ambrose says that Matthew preached in Media.\* The apostle Thaddeus preached in Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Persia.† “Agheus, who is Ageus and Acheus, travelled over Assyria.”‡ Bar Hebreus says, “After Adeus, Agheus, his disciple, began to preach to all the Persians, and Assyrians, and Medes.”§ “The whole of Persia, and the regions of the Assyrians, and of the Armenians, and of the Medes, received the priesthood (Gospel) from Ageus, a weaver of silk clothing, a disciple of the apostle Thaddeus.”||

“Mares, another disciple of Adeus, proclaimed the Gospel in Babylonia, Assyria, and Persia.”¶ “After Agheus, Mares, another disciple of Adeus, preached in Athur” (Assyria).\*\*

“If, at any time, Matthew the Evangelist visited any of the Eastern regions with these (i. e., Thomas, Adeus, and Mares); he did not, however, go beyond the bounds of Nisibis and Assyria, but, when he had passed over these regions, soon

\* Assem., Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 8.

† Ibid., p. 15.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid., v. iv., p. 16.

|| Elias of Damascus. Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 17.

¶ Ibid.

\*\* Ibid., p. 18. Bar Hebreus.

returned. Bartholomew, also, travelled over these and other regions, and preached in greater Armenia."\* "Adeus preached at Edessa, and in Athur (Assyria), and Môsul, and in Persia."† "At length he (Mares [of the seventy]) went to announce the Gospel in all the parts of the land of Babylon, and of both the Arachæ (i. e., both Persia and Assyria). \* \* \* Nor did he cease to visit all these regions, and also the places in which Thaddeus had preached the faith, and to visit, and to catechise, and to baptize, and to teach, and to build up churches, and to cure diseases, and to perform signs and wonders, until he converted very many to the faith, and wonderfully propagated the Christian religion in those parts."‡ Mares Solomones says that Mar Mares was ordained by the seventy; and that he preached in various provinces of the Diglitæ, or Tigris, and in Persis (Persia).§

"Gregory Bar Hebreus says that Thomas preached to the Parthians and Medes. The apostle Thomas was the first pontiff of the East. We are taught, from the book of the preaching of the holy apostles, that the divine apostle Thomas first preached the Christian faith in the East, *in the second year from the ascent of our Lord.* \* \* \* He preached to different people, viz., *Parthians, Medes, and Persians,*" &c.||

"It seems sufficiently demonstrated that Chris-

\* Assem., v. iv., p. 20.

† Ibid., *Amens.*

‡ Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 20.

§ Ibid., p. 22.

|| Ibid., p. 33.

tians, laymen, deacons, priests, and bishops, have always been in Persia from the apostolic times, and forward in an uninterrupted succession.”\*

“The Magi, who had adored Christ, first introduced the seed of the Gospel.”\*

“The Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and those who inhabited Mesopotamia, and wondered at the apostles speaking with various tongues, after they had received the Holy Ghost, doubtless introduced the faith of Christ into their own regions.”†

“Thaddeus, Thomas, and other disciples in person taught in Syria, Chaldea, and Persia. Finally, the martyrs of every sex, age, and condition, confirmed with their own blood the faith that was everywhere propagated.”‡ “He (i. e., Mares) received his clerical office from Ades and Thomas, for they two made him patriarch of all the East. These three disciples and their successors taught the whole region of the East, from the passage of the Euphrates even to the farthest parts of the East.”§ *Amrus.*

III. The ten tribes were in a state peculiarly favourable to the reception of the Gospel. They were not hardened by rejecting the personal ministry of Christ, or by aiding in the work of crucifixion. Consequently, they were free from the curse which has, to the present day, rested with

\* Assem., Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 33.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid., p. 36.

§ Ibid., v. iv., p. 19.

fearful weight upon those who uttered the imprecation, "His blood be on us and on our children!" But there was no such cause operating upon the captive Israelites to imbitter them against the Saviour. Nor have we any evidence that they were expecting a mere temporal king in the promised Messiah. For a thousand years they had held very little intercourse with the two tribes; and their national antipathies would naturally render them averse to the idea of political union; while, on the other hand, the report they received from the "wise men,"\* who went expressly to worship the Messiah, must have favoured the expectation of a spiritual rather than a temporal head. And what they saw and experienced on the day of Pentecost was also calculated to prepare them, and those who heard their report, to welcome the Gospel. Their hearts, too, were probably softened by their long captivity. In a word, their circumstances appear to have been altogether favourable to their conversion.

IV. History furnishes evidence of the conversion of the ten tribes to Christianity under the preaching of the apostles and their immediate successors. Some of the proof has been given incidentally in

\* The Nestorians say that the "wise men" took with them gold as an acceptable present for the Messiah as an earthly king; but, knowing that he was also a Divine personage, they brought frankincense and myrrh to burn as incense in their adorations before him.

our preceding quotations. I shall introduce one or two passages more from the pages of the learned Assemani, to whose volumes the curious reader is referred. "The Adjabena (i. e., inhabitants of Adiabene), Elamites, Persians, and Medes," says Assemani, "were brought over to the faith by the apostles Thomas, Thaddeus, Simon, Matthew, and Bartholomew, and by the disciples Ade, Mares, and Agheus, as has been shown above from Greek, Latin, and Syrian authors. After those first apostles of the Persians, the prelates subject to the archbishop of Seleucia aided either in imbuing the same people with the sacred rites of the Christians, or in confirming them in the faith which they had embraced." And again he says, "First of all beyond Mesopotamia, as it appears, Adjabena (Adiabene) and Elamites, two of the provinces of the Persian kingdom, very quickly embraced the Christian faith, viz., in the very commencement of the infant church."\*

Here we are told that the inhabitants of the very places where the captive Israelites then lived, were converted to the Christian faith under the preaching of the apostles, who went everywhere preaching the word several years before the disciples preached to the Gentiles.

Eusebius,† the earliest of our ecclesiastical histori-

\* Assemani, *Bib. Orient.*, vol. iv., p. 414.

† *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. ii., c. 1.



ans, expressly informs us that the apostles "were not yet in a situation to venture to impart the faith to the nations, and, therefore, only announced it to the Jews." This was after the dispersion of the disciples and before the conversion of Cornelius, which is mentioned subsequently. Eusebius states, on the authority of Origen, that Parthia was assigned to Thomas; and he sums up the general success of the Gospel among the Israelites in the following graphic language: "Thus, then, under a celestial influence and co-operation, the doctrine of the Saviour, like the rays of the sun, quickly irradiated the whole world. Presently, in accordance with Divine prophecy, the sound of his inspired evangelists and apostles had gone throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. Throughout every city and village, like a replenished garner, churches were seen abounding and filled with members."\* At length he mentions the conversion of Cornelius, and the first Gentile converts under Peter and Paul, as an act of the special, "gratuitous benevolence of God;" making it evident that the success of the Gospel among the Jews was prior to its reception by the Gentiles. And hence we infer that the numerous converts in the country of the ten tribes must have been the captive sons of Israel.

\* Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., c. 3.

## CHAPTER XI.

Scriptural Proof of their Conversion.—Speech of Paul.—Epistle of James.

BUT the inquiry may be made, why, if the ten tribes were so early converted to the Christian faith, is there no mention made of it in any of the apostolic writings? In reply, I ask, why is there no mention made of the labours of the zealous Thomas and others, who carried them the Gospel? Is not the silence of Scripture in relation to them presumptive evidence that they were labouring at a distance from the writers of the New Testament? And why is there no mention made of the extensive spread of the Gospel recorded by Eusebius? That the word should be preached thus extensively before the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke, xxi., 32), or, at least, during the lifetime of some of the apostles (Mat., xvi, 28; Mark, ix, 1), we are expressly told by our Lord himself, and we cannot doubt that his word was accomplished. Its verity is found in history.

With this proof before us, it is sufficient to know that there is no intimation in the writings of the New Testament that the ten tribes were not brought into the Gospel covenant. Paul, in speaking of the rejection of the Jewish nation, tells the Romans that they must not think that all Israel was cast

away; for, as God had reserved to himself no less than seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, while Elias thought he was left alone, so, then, at that time, there was "a remnant, according to the election of grace," perhaps as greatly surpassing their expectations as the seven thousand exceeded the belief of Elijah.

Nor is it surprising if the Romans were ignorant of the success of the Gospel among the captive Israelites, when we remember that the latter were living at so great a distance from them, and in the Parthian empire. But let us see if we cannot find something in the apostolic writings more positive than this general intimation of Paul in Romans, xi., 4, 5, 7.

In his able defence before King Agrippa (Acts, xxvi.), Paul incidentally alludes to the piety\* and devotion of the ten tribes, in common with numbers from the two tribes, who cherished the same glorious hope of life and blessedness beyond the grave which sustained him in all his trials and sufferings. "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." *Our twelve tribes; the twelve tribes of us* (Gr.). Was the learned and inspired apostle ignorant of the situation of the *ten tribes*? Why, then, does he class them with the other two?

\* Howes's Works, v. i., p. 567. "We find the apostle speaking of the piety of the twelve tribes, Acts, xxvi., 7."

Did he, as some have conjectured, put the *few* who had returned, or who, perhaps, remained after their captivity, in the place of the whole kingdom of Israel? Or did he, as others have maintained, speak of Judah only as the *twelve* tribes? Either of these positions supposes that Paul was as ignorant as we are of the situation of his brethren according to the flesh. But was Paul, with all his learning, and under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, too, less informed than Josephus, who, not twenty years after this, tells us so explicitly that "the ten tribes were to that day in the land of their captivity, beyond the Euphrates?" Moreover, Paul was addressing a Jew of great learning, whom he knew "to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." If any one will say that Paul was ignorant of the situation of the ten tribes, Agrippa certainly was not. He is the same King Agrippa who, three or four years afterward, in the famous speech from which we have already quoted, mentions the fact, admitted by all, that the ten tribes were then in captivity under the *Parthians* beyond the Euphrates, and in *Adiabene*; just where we have seen the Gospel was preached so early as the second year after the ascension of our Lord, or twenty-seven years previous to the delivery of ~~the~~ speech of Paul before King Agrippa. We have seen that it took effect there; that the people readily embraced

Christianity in great numbers; and that churches were organized and edified in the faith. And now Paul, in addressing one who was conversant in all these matters, speaks of their piety as a well-known fact: "Our twelve tribes *instantly serving God.*" We have no reason to believe that the temple service was ever revived among the ten tribes after their captivity; and, furthermore, the language of Paul is peculiar to the Christian dispensation, and is in the *present tense*, referring to what was then being done among a people who had already embraced the Gospel. "For which hope's sake," says Paul, "I am accused of the Jews." It was not the hope of the promised Messiah, for Christ had already come; and how could Paul be arraigned for hoping for his appearance, as did the unconverted Jews? But it was the *hope* of the *resurrection* of eternal life promised through a risen Saviour, and which was specially dear to every believer in Christ. It was that hope which the apostle in his epistles labours so much to establish upon a firm foundation, and for which he was ready to suffer the loss of all things, "If by any means," says he, "I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

To this hope the rites of Judaism had so little direct reference, that the doctrine of the resurrection was entirely rejected by a large portion of those Jews who continued to practise them; while

it was the animating theme of the converted Israelites, who served God day and night under the banners of the Gospel. To this promise the ten tribes, who had probably, till then, been buried in the delusions of idolatry, now "hoped to come." It was the hope "*brought to light in the Gospel*" through *Christ, who is our life*; and those only who believed in him had encouragement to serve God day and night, "knowing that their labour was not in vain in the Lord."

If the captive Israelites were not thus serving God, why do we not hear Agrippa, who was acquainted with their condition, objecting that they were serving idols, and not God? But, having been reminded how many there were who had embraced the hope of the promise for which Paul was arraigned, and instructed as to the ground of that hope, instead of raising objections, he is ready to join this band of believers, and exclaims, "Almost thou persuadest *me* to be a Christian [also]." He gave full credit to all that Paul had said; he saw what numbers, even including their brethren in captivity, had embraced the faith that inspired the apostle with such zeal and eloquence, and he was ready, not only to have acquitted Paul and set him at liberty, but was almost persuaded to become a Christian himself.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES furnishes evidence still more conclusive than the foregoing of the conver-

sion of the ten tribes. It is addressed to the *twelve tribes* which are scattered abroad. They are greeted as brethren. They are encouraged by promises and considerations applicable only to Christians. Their faith in Christ is commended. Throughout the epistle they are exhorted and admonished as *brethren*, as *beloved brethren*; terms that are repeated not less than twelve times in this short epistle. Their churches and the elders of the Church are mentioned; and no one can doubt, in view of the internal evidence contained in the epistle, that it was addressed to the twelve tribes as *Christians*. It was written about the year sixty or sixty-one, almost thirty years after the crucifixion, and about twenty-five years after the Gospel was proclaimed by Thomas\* and others among the ten tribes; so that the Gospel had not only been long established and taken deep root among them, but the ardour of their first love had had time to cool. That it had considerably abated, might reasonably be inferred from the expostulations and reproofs of the venerable apostle; and this may have been the principal occasion of the letter being addressed to them. James, being at the head of the Jewish Church, and bishop of Jerusalem, felt at liberty to use great plainness of speech in addressing the Jewish converts while in their backslidden state; though he does so in the spirit of kindness and courtesy.

\* Assem., Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 33.

Although the twelve tribes were scattered abroad, and a great part of them in the distant countries of the Parthians and Medes, the apostle appears to have been well acquainted with their circumstances and wants, and knew into what particular sins they had fallen, and just how to adapt his epistle to their case. For this his situation in the Holy City, the centre of information as well as of influence in the Hebrew nation, was peculiarly favourable; and, as we have seen that Josephus, and King Agrippa, and Paul, all living in that age, knew the abode and condition of the captive Israelites, we could not for a moment suppose that James was less informed of their situation, even if there was not the clearest evidence to that effect in his epistle. They were not then "the *lost* tribes," as they have been for centuries past. Not only were they well known, but, while we have no evidence that there was much general intercourse between them and the other Jews, the apostles and primitive disciples appear to have bestowed upon them a commendable share of attention; and it is equally clear that the efforts made for their conversion were attended with great success.\* Of their immediate reception of the Gospel of Matthew, to which the other scriptures were soon added, in their ancient language, we have already spoken. While the Epistle to the

\* Assem., Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 414.



Hebrews may have been written more especially for the Jews in Jerusalem or Palestine, it is plain that the Epistle of James was addressed as much to the *ten* as to the two tribes. Beza, Cave, Scott, Fabricius, Bishop Tomline, and others, are of opinion that it was addressed to the believing Jews, who were dispersed all over the world. Michaelis considers it certain that Saint James wrote to persons already converted from Judaism to Christianity. Dr. Benson is of opinion that this epistle was written to the converted Jews out of Palestine; while very few think it was addressed to all the Jews, whether converted or not.\* In addition to what has been said on this point, I may add the following from Bishop Tomline: "The object of the apostolic epistles was to confirm and not to convert; to correct what was amiss in those who did believe, and not in those who did not believe. The sense of the above inscription seems to be limited to the believing Jews by what follows almost immediately, 'The trial of your faith worketh patience' (i., 31). And again, 'My brethren have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons' (ii., 1). These passages *could not* be addressed to unbelievers." (Bishop Tomline's Chr. Theol., p. 472.) If, then, James wrote only to converted Jews, and to the *ten tribes* as well as the two, the *ten tribes* were already converted.

\* Horne's Introduction, v. iv., p. 412.

Having shown that the ten tribes were, as a people, converted to Christianity in the apostolic age of the church, few words will be required to prove that the Nestorian Christians are their direct descendants.

1. They inhabit the same places that were occupied by the ten tribes at the time of their conversion, and until the beginning of the fifth century, as has been already shown.

2. Nestorian churches and prelates have flourished in an uninterrupted succession in the same places where they were founded by the apostles among the Israelites. "Succeeding those first apostles of the Persians [Thomas, Thaddeus, &c., who preached in *Adiabene* and *Media*], the prelates subject to the archbishop of *Seleucia* aided either in imbuing the *same people* with the sacred rites of the Christians, or in confirming them in the faith which they had embraced."\*

Now it is well known that *Seleucia* was from the earliest times the chief seat of authority and influence among the Nestorians, and that their archbishop, and subsequently their patriarchs, resided there, and ruled over the whole country inhabited by the ten tribes. Mares, above named, governed the church at *Seleucia* in the year 82,† and from that time it continued to be the residence of the archbishop till A.D. 498, when the Nes-

\* Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 414.

† Ib., p. 36.

torians, becoming the dominant sect in the East, made it the seat of their new patriarch,\* whose successors occupied it till the year 762, when it was removed to Bagdad.†

*Adiabene* (Adjabena), Assyria, and Halah (Halachæ) were metropolitan bishoprics, whose prelates, in A.D. 852, had the principal agency in ordaining the Nestorian patriarchs,‡ and they had embraced the Christian faith in the very commencement of the infant church.§ “The schools of the Syrians flourished nowhere more than in *Adiabene*.” “This is a region of Persia mostly inhabited by Christians.”|| As before remarked, *Adiabene* is the region inhabited by the main body of the Nestorians, as it was formerly by the captive Israelites. At a later day it is mentioned as a district of *Persia*, as it was of *Parthia* in the first century. Now compare these facts with the statement of Assemani: “It seems sufficiently demonstrated that Christians, laymen, deacons, priests, and bishops have always been in Persia, from the apostolic times and forward in an uninterrupted succession.”¶ And again: “From this number of ancient churches any one may be satisfied how widely the Christian religion was formerly propagated in the regions of Assyria, Adja-

\* Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 67.

† Ib., p. 415-16.

‡ Ib., p. 932-3.

† Ib., p. 625.

§ Ib., p. 414.

¶ Ib., p. 33, 419.

bena (Adiabene), Germea (adjoining Adiabene), and Chalachena (Halah).”

Thus have we traced, by the light of history, a regular connexion between the converted Israelites and the present Nestorians. The Jews assert very positively that the Nestorians were converted from Judaism to Christianity immediately after the death of Christ. This statement was made by the fore-mentioned Daniel and Ezekiel, in the presence of myself and our native helpers, and it has been repeatedly made by other Jews. The accounts of the Nestorians themselves entirely harmonize with the testimony of history and of their Jewish brethren, that they received the Gospel directly from the apostles. And they mention, as their first religious teachers, the same apostles whose names have so frequently come before us as those who propagated the Gospel among the ten tribes. They also point out particular places where different individuals of these apostolic missionaries preached, and where some of them laid down their lives. Several of these places have monuments of long standing erected to the memory of their beloved apostles.

A very substantial stone church which I saw in the north part of Assyria was, at a very early day, erected to the memory of the apostle Bartholomew, who preached in that region, particularly in the present district of Albagh. Some of the Syriac

writers have affirmed that it was built by Bartholomew himself.\* But the Nestorians, probably with more correctness, assign to it a somewhat later date. Other places in Assyria are indicated where Thaddeus and Mares proclaimed the Gospel; and in Media, near the Lake of Ooroomiah, is a church called Mar Tooma or Thöma, from the apostle Thomas, who is said to have made that his last stopping-place before proceeding on his way towards India.

The Nestorians regard the apostle Thomas with much interest, as one of the chief instruments in their conversion to Christianity, and with some others, and especially Thaddeus, who remained with them a longer period, he is mentioned with great affection.

The Nestorians have the history† of churches now standing in Adiabene, or the central parts of Assyria, that were built more than two centuries before the Mohammedan era. One in Ooroomiah is said to have been built in the second century of the Christian era; and another, which was taken from the Nestorians by the Moslems,‡ bearing a

\* I have an ancient Syrian MS., giving some account of Bartholomew's labours in Assyria, which says that he was from the tribe of Isacchar, thus making him of the ten tribes. See also Calmet, art. Bartholomew. He is also called Nathaniel, or Nathaniel Bar Tolemey.

† Tesheta d'Mer Eziah, Syr. MS.

‡ The mosque into which it has been converted is regarded as

date, in the Cufic character, of repairs made by them about seven centuries ago. The Mohammedans say it was an old building at that time. While a want of historical records makes it difficult to fix satisfactorily the date of particular churches, enough is known to show that Nestorian churches, now standing, were erected before the beginning of the fifth century; when, as we have seen, Jerome assures us that the ten tribes were still in this region, "their captivity having never been loosed."\*

The Jews and other classes of the people testify to the very early residence of the Nestorians in this country, making it appear that they have not succeeded in the place of the captive Israelites at a late day.

The present race of Mohammedans (the Affshars) are not the natives of this soil, but came from Khorassan, or from the east of the Caspian Sea, only a few centuries ago. But their learned men say there is no doubt of the great antiquity of the Nestorians, who, they affirm, were here before the Christian era. The Jews who were carried captive by the kings of Assyria to these parts, say the residence of the Nestorians has been contemporary with their own.

None of these Nestorians pretend to tell when, so sacred that no Christian had been allowed to enter it till I obtained permission for our party to visit it about a year ago. Its dome is about sixty feet high, and it is the best edifice in the city.

\* Tom. vi., p. 7, 80.

or under what circumstances, their ancestors came here. But, on my showing some of their most intelligent scholars the account of the captivity of the ten tribes under the Assyrian kings, they have said at once that this must have been the occasion of their removal from the land of their fathers. If they came here since the commencement of the Christian era, it is truly strange that all of them should be so totally ignorant on the subject, and stranger still that no one should have heard of the removal of the captive Israelites, whose places the present inhabitants now occupy; and all this while there has been a regular, uninterrupted succession of bishops, priests, deacons, and churches, from the apostolic times to the present day!

## CHAPTER XII

Prophecies relating to the Conversion of the Ten Tribes, and their future Prospects.

WHAT prophecies or passages of Scripture, I am asked, intimate that the ten tribes should so early be visited in mercy, and acknowledge Messiah their king? In reply, I might inquire, which of the inspired prophets informs us that they would not welcome their Messiah till many centuries after his incarnation? But the subject is beset with apparent difficulties, since it is certain that some of the most glorious promises, consequent upon their entire conversion and reception to the full favour of God, have not, as yet, been accomplished. It becomes us, therefore, to review with much care what the Holy Spirit has revealed concerning this branch of God's chosen people. Passing by, for the present, those more cheering predictions that remain to be fulfilled, and others which, though in process of accomplishment, may be regarded by some as of equivocal import, we will direct our attention to a portion of the prophetic writings which all our best critics, both ancient and modern, regard as having a direct and specific application to Israel, ~~of~~ the ten tribes. I refer to the first three chapters



of Hosea, which in Townsend's Bible is entitled, "*Hosea's first appeal to the Ten Tribes.*"

To avoid any appearance of wresting this prophecy to the support of a particular hypothesis, I shall base most of my remarks upon an exposition of the judicious Fuller (vol. ii., p. 110). "These chapters," he remarks, "are addressed chiefly to the ten tribes. Under the forms of signs and parables,\* as I suppose, he delivers in the *first* chapter some very pointed reproofs to that idolatrous people, but concludes with great and precious promises to their distant posterity." He is commanded to go and take "a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms," and is supposed to have children by her. Such a command communicated to the people would shock them as grossly indelicate. "Nay," saith the prophet, like Nathan to David, "but ye are the men! If the Lord be a husband to you, he must have a wife of worse whoredoms than these!" On account of their spiritual adulteries, God says, "I will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel," and "I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away" (v. 4, 6). "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor num-

\* Whether the language of these passages is parabolic, or the prophet actually formed alliances like those described in the text, the interpretation or application to the idolatrous Israelites is the same.—Compare Ezek., xxxvii., 1-10.

bered ; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people [the place to which God would cast them away], *there* shall it be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God" (v. 10). After many cutting things in the second chapter, in which, to show the odiousness of Israel's conduct, and bring it home to their bosoms, they are again compared to an adulterous wife, who, having dissolved the marriage bond, deserved to be stripped, and, with her spurious offspring, turned out by her injured husband, they are even told that such will actually be their portion. Yet, after this, from verse 14 to the end, the most precious promises are made to their posterity. His "alluring her, and bringing her into the wilderness," however, seems rather to be expressive of present judgments than of future mercies. It denotes, I apprehend, not the drawings of love, but the *devisings* of Providence, to render her sin its own punishment.\* As an injured husband makes use of the adulteries of his wife to convict and banish her, so the Lord would cause the fondness of this people for idolatry and idolaters to draw them into the Assyrian net (ch. vii., 11, 12), and they should be

\* "I cannot find that מפתיה anywhere signifies to influence in a way of mercy, but properly means to *entice* or *deceive* ; and thus God, in just judgment, *entices and deceives* sinners by giving them up to their own delusions."—See 2 Chron., xviii., 19-22. Ezek., xiv., 9.

carried away captive, as into a wilderness, and for a long time be in a manner lost.—Ezek., xx., 35. Yet, as in the wilderness of old he spake kindly to their fathers, and thence gave them the land of promise, so thence shall she again “receive her vineyards;” and as “the valley of Achor,” where Achan’s idolatry was punished, was to Israel “a door of hope,” in that the fierce anger of the Lord was hereby turned away (Josh., vii., 6), so shall it be in this case. After having made an example of many for their idolatry, “his anger will be turned away, and he will comfort the survivors.” In what way could God so “speak comfortably” unto his outcasts as in the winning tones of the Gospel? In giving them this Gospel, how beautifully did God fulfil his gracious promise, “*I will speak comfortably unto her!*” This language cannot imply mere temporal blessings, for they are signified under the figure of “vineyards.” It is language addressed to “her heart” (Heb.). And again, the place of her exile was to become “a door of hope,” where, after passing through sore trials, she should be purified from her idolatry, and be received into favour with God, as was Israel in the valley of Achor. Afflictions may soften the heart, and prepare it to welcome with gratitude the balm that is offered to heal the anguish of her wounds; but it is the *remedy* which finally opens “a door of hope;” and where shall

we find so efficient a remedy as the Gospel, the only hope for lost, perishing man ?

God has verified his promise, and spoken "comfortably" to Israel, by giving them the Gospel in the land of their captivity ; thus opening to them a door of hope, and filling the afflicted daughter of Zion with joy and praise. "And she shall sing there as in the days of her youth." What is to cause this song for joy ? Certainly it is not the triumphal song of her return from captivity, for the ensuing part of her history forbids such an interpretation, as does also the language of this passage itself: she shall sing *there* ; there, in the wilderness. As in the preceding chapter, "*in the place* where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people [God having cast them off], *there* shall it be said, Ye are the sons of the living God." Thus, "she shall sing *there*, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi\* (i. e., my husband, v. 15, 16), and I will betroth thee unto me for ever ; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord," v. 19, 20.

The nature of a betrothment or espousal has

\* Signifying an *espoused*, not a married husband.

been already explained in treating of the customs of the Nestorians. That it does not here mean the consummation of the marriage covenant will be more fully shown in our examination of Hosea, iii. It is, however, a covenant which is entered into by the most solemn promises on the part of God. And as he has betrothed Israel unto himself in faithfulness, so will he return and consummate that perfect union of which this is the inviolable pledge. With individual Christians this final union takes place in another world; but this cannot be said of a collective body. If, *as a body*, the children of Israel are espoused to the Lord in this world, with a solemn promise that they shall *know the Lord*, or in due time be received into that full covenant which shall make them *one* with Him; so in this world only can they, *as a body*, be welcomed to the perfect marriage relation.

The betrothed wife, as before stated, receives the favour and protection, and bears the name, of her affianced husband. Thus it has been with the captive Israelites. They bear the name of Christ their Head, and for this name thousands of them have laid down their lives. They have received both temporal and spiritual blessings. Literally as well as figuratively, they have "received their vineyards;" and though, in the process of trial, God has brought them through the fire to refine them as silver is refined, so that only a "*remnant*"

is left, still they have been wonderfully preserved. A jealous God has watched over them, saying, "He that toucheth you touches the apple of mine eye."

In great faithfulness has he fulfilled his promise: "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground [with all that might hurt them]; and I will break the bow and the sword, and the battle out of the land,\* and will make them to lie down safely" (v. 18).

Long before I had any idea that the Nestorian Christians were the special subjects of such a covenant, it was to me matter of the greatest astonishment and admiration, that they had, as it were by a special interposition of Providence (I had almost said by a wonderful miracle), been kept in so much safety, surrounded by enemies who have stood ready to devour them. But in vain have the beast and the false prophet sought their destruction. No enemy has ever been suffered to enter their munition of rocks. The Turks, the Persians, the Koords, have all attempted it in vain. They have penetrated to the borders of their strongholds, and raised the sword against them with such relentless fury, that the place of greatest carnage

\* The Hebrew word ארץ, *eretz* is as often rendered *land* as *earth*, and here it appears to agree best with the context.

is to this day called the "lake of blood!" But God had made a *covenant* with their enemies, saying, "Thus far, but no farther, shalt thou go." A place was still provided where they might lie down safely: a stronghold which the armies of the redoubtable Omar attempted in vain to penetrate. The people have no tradition of its ever having been entered by a foreign foe. As I passed through the whole length of their secure mountain abode, travelling over rocks and precipices, where the wild goats could scarcely secure a footing, and through rocky defiles which even the hardy mules, that were accustomed to the country, could not pass; everywhere the vision was bounded by nature's bulwarks rising to the clouds, as if to form a place where God would "make them to lie down safely."

Nor were they insensible to his protecting care. They felt that it was the work of the Great Shepherd, providing for his flock a secure retreat from the ravening beasts of prey that prowled around them; and, in recognition of God's special care for them who were the sheep of his pasture, they called their mountain dales *Tiyâry*, or "Sheep-folds!" The full import of this name can only be felt in the East, where the *fold*, like a strong fortress, provides security against the wily thief as well as devouring wolves. These folds of the Great Shepherd, says tradition, have at times

been the only asylum for his exiled church. When the flames of persecution have been kindled around her, and the clangour of war has been heard on her borders, she has flown, as on eagle's wings, into her place in the wilderness, where the earth helped the woman, while the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood to destroy her.

We have said that God made a covenant for them with their enemies. He has inspired a dread of their prowess which prevents any attempt on the part of the Persians or Turks to enter their mountain abodes. Some even ascribe to them supernatural power, affirming that there is a magic influence in their fierce aspect before which their boldest enemies quail.

With the Mohammedan caliphs, in their greatest power, God made a covenant for them, so that favour and protection were extended to them in exchange for the services they rendered to the Moslems as men of business and physicians.

“Jesujabus, the sovereign pontiff of the Nestorians,” says Mosheim, “concluded a treaty first with Mohammed, and afterward with Omar, and obtained many advantages for his sect.”—*Bib. Orient. Assem.*, v. iv., p. 94.—*Eccl. Hist.*, v. i., p. 530. I saw at the patriarch's what is said to be the treaty with Mohammed. It was in ancient Arabic, and bore the appearance of great antiquity. The Koordish chief also said it was from Mohammed.



If we may believe an ancient historian quoted by Calmet, and of high repute among the Jews, even the world's great conqueror, whose invincible cohorts strewed the plains that skirt the Nestorian mountains on the south with three hundred thousand mangled bodies of the Persians, was arrested by an edict of the Almighty in his designs of disturbing the peace of God's covenant-people. Says Josephus Ben Gorion, "When Alexander the Great would have passed over the dark mountains which separate the country of the Israelites from the other nations, he was prevented by a voice which cried to him, '*Take care that you enter not into the house of God!*'"

Thus has Jehovah made a covenant with their enemies, broken the bow and the sword, and the battle, out of the land, and made them to lie down safely. In the covenant of the Gospel he has espoused them unto himself in faithfulness, and his solemn pledge has gone forth that he will, in due time, receive them into the most intimate communion, "*and they shall know the Lord.*"

HOSEA, III. "The *third* chapter," says Fuller,\* "contains another prophecy on the same subject. Like the former, it is introduced under the form of a parable. The case supposed is that of a man attached to a woman who is an adulteress. 'Go, saith the Lord to the prophet, see if thou canst

\* Vol. ii., p. 111.

love such a one ; yet such, if anything, must be my love to this people.' The prophet is farther supposed to go and covenant with this adultriss (i. e., *betroth* her), engaging her to desist many days from her lewd courses, living, as it were, a widow, by herself, and afterward she should become his wife. Such was the love of the Lord for the children of Israel. He loved them notwithstanding their idolatry, and intended, at a future time, to take them to be his people. He would not receive them, however, in their idolatry, nor till a proper time had elapsed, in which they should live in a state of separation ; but, in due time, he would take them to himself as his Church and people, remembering their sin no more."

This is, no doubt, a correct view of this passage. But it needs a more particular explanation. I have already remarked that the custom alluded to in the second verse corresponds entirely with the practice of the Nestorians in their espousals at the present day ; so that they find not the least difficulty in understanding its application by the prophet. Their bishops and others to whom I have shown this and the preceding chapter say, without hesitation, that it is just what the language in the foregoing case implies, a *betrothment* or *espousal*, and not a marriage, as many have supposed.

We are told (v. 2) that the terms of the espousals are settled and the money and provisions de-

livered (just as a Nestorian would now do in betrothing a wife); but it was not till after *many days*, or a long time of probation, that the prophet would consummate the more perfect union of which this is a pledge. On account of the life she had formerly led, it was particularly suitable that a long interval should elapse between the espousals and the marriage. There are cases among this people where an interval of ten years has elapsed from the betrothment to the marriage; and during all this time the parties are spoken of as husband and wife, and are considered as under the strictest obligations of fidelity to each other. If, therefore, many centuries have elapsed from the time the Israelites were betrothed in the Gospel covenant till the present day, it is not inconsistent ~~with~~ the nature of the figure here used.

We have seen, in reviewing the previous chapter, that God did all that was required on his part when he espoused the Israelites to himself in the new covenant. He suffered them to be called by his name instead of Baalim, or their idols; he bestowed upon them favour and protection. In this chapter he makes a special requisition of them, viz., that they entirely abstain from idolatry. Have they fulfilled their part of the covenant? If not, what assurance have we that God will finally receive them to himself as his peculiar people? Suppose we look for the lost tribes among

the heathen, as some have done, or absorbed in the idolatrous worship of images and of the consecrated host, like the nominal Christians of the Romish Church, how could it be said that they had fulfilled their part of this covenant? "Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man." This requisition have the Israelites most strictly observed since their conversion to Christianity. They have abandoned every form of idolatry. But we have no reason to think they did it before. On the contrary, there are strong intimations that they continued in the idolatry which occasioned their captivity, for a long time after their removal to Assyria. The other Jews forsook their idols on their return from Babylon. But Eusebius speaks of some of the Jews who were sunk in idolatry when the Gospel was first proclaimed to them. Speaking of the general spread of the Gospel before it was preached at all to the Gentiles, he says: "Those who, in consequence of the delusions that had descended to them from their ancestors, had been fettered by the ancient disease of idolatrous superstition, were now liberated by the power of Christ, through the teaching and miracles of his messengers. And as if delivered from dreadful masters, and emancipated from the most cruel bondage, on the one hand renounced the whole multitude of gods and demons, and on the

other confessed that there was only one true God, the creator of all things. This same God they now honoured by the rites of a true piety, under the influence of that inspired and reasonable worship which had been planted among men by our Saviour." Then appears the first notice of a work of grace as having subsequently commenced among the Gentiles. "But the gratuitous benevolence of God being now poured out *also* upon the rest of the nations, Cornelius was the first who received the faith in Christ."\*

But surely no one will maintain that God betrothed Israel to himself anew in the act of their removal to the wild mountains of Assyria. This was only the punishment of their former idolatry. At least, their removal into the wilderness was only preparatory to the covenant blessings that God intended at a future time to bestow upon them there. Nor can it with any propriety be said of the other Jews who are dispersed abroad over the earth. They have forsaken their idols, it is true; but nowhere have they been made to lie down safely; nowhere has God spoken comfortably to them; and nowhere have they raised the song of grateful joy to their affianced head (e. ii., 15-18). But all this has been true of the lost tribes for eighteen centuries. And never could it more truly be said of a people in their political

\* Eusebius, Eccl. Hist., b. ii., c. 3.

state, that they have been "many days without a king and without a prince." They have none of their own; and of the mountain tribes it is equally true that they have not even a foreign king or prince to rule over them. In their religious rites they are "without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." As a people, they are without a sacrifice; for while the free-will or thank offerings of the Jews are made by individuals, they are nowhere commanded in their ritual; they are not observed at stated times, nor by the people as a body; while they are as truly "without an image" as is any Protestant church. If the practice of the nominal Jews in other places be the same as it is here, we can hardly say that they are without a sacrifice; since they keep the Passover and some other sacrificial observances, as a regular constituent part of their national worship. But not so with the Nestorian Christians.

"Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." After all that has been said of the nature of an espousal, and its being only preliminary to the closer conjugal union of which it is an inviolable pledge, the reader will be prepared to anticipate for the children of Israel a far more intimate relation to their Great Head (the

Husband of the Church) than they have ever yet enjoyed. If in their descendants, the Nestorian Christians, there is evidence of a great want of spirituality, this is just what we should expect from their present relation to the Lord Jesus, as described by the prophet. They are, as yet, only  *betrothed*  (not married) to him. But as surely as he has betrothed them to himself, and that for ever, and in faithfulness, may we look forward with unwavering confidence to the day when his bride, having made herself ready, shall put on her beautiful garments, and, beaming with heavenly radiance, shall come forth, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

On their first espousal to the Lamb of God, in the Gospel covenant, they appear to have received more of the smiles of His presence than they now enjoy. And we shall find enough in their unparalleled zeal and energy in diffusing the Gospel over almost the whole of Asia, and in the comparative purity of their doctrines and practice, to sustain our most sanguine hopes of the extended agency they are destined to exert in expelling the deep moral-darkness which enshrouds the dying millions of these benighted lands.

We have justly cherished the brightest anticipations in connexion with the return of Israel to their promised Messiah. Nor will our hopes be blasted; though it may be objected, that "if half of Israel

are already converted, how can our long-cherished hopes be realized? Are the Nestorian missions, which extended from the Mediterranean to the Pacific, and from the Indian Ocean to the wall of China, glimmering with a feeble radiance only to expire with the revolutions of revolving centuries, the only fruits that should follow their conversion? These fruits are withered and gone, or, at least, to mortal vision, are seen only on the historian's page."

Shall we, then, join with the mother of Ephraim (i. e., the Israelites) in the "voice that was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not?" But let not Rachel, or, rather, the church of God, whom she personifies, despair. "Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and thy children shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope *in thine end*, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border." But whence is this hope to be entertained by Rachel? Her children had been gone for more than a century, and their name and memorial were in a manner perished. Observe the answer: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unac-



customed to the yoke : turn thou me, and I shall be turned ; for thou art Jehovah, my God. Surely, after that I was turned, I repented ; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh ; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

This confession of Ephraim is not historical, but prophetic ; for the state of mind here described is represented as taking place at a time so very distant, that he should look back upon the days of his idolatry as the period of his *youth*. [Not of his riper years, for then was the period of his espousals, when for *many days* he should cease to defile himself with idols.] "Nevertheless, when he shall return to the Lord he shall obtain mercy." Ephraim has not only a mother to bewail him, but a father, who, as soon as he hears the voice of the prodigal, is moved with compassion, and runs to meet him. "Is Ephraim, my dear son, is he a pleasant child ? for, since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still ; therefore my bowels are troubled for him ; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." The virgin of Israel is then directed to prepare for returning home. "Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps ; set thine heart towards the highway, even the way which thou wentest ; turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities."\* She

\* Jer., xxxi, 15-21. Fuller's Works, v. ii., p. 112.

who had been taken from her idolatries, and betrothed to the Lord after remaining "many days" as a chaste spouse, agreeably to the terms of the contract, is received into full favour; her sins are remembered no more; and from being termed an adulteress, she is now called the *virgin* of Israel. The period of Israel's probation is ended, and "They shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am *married* unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and will bring you to Zion; and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."\* This proclamation was made particularly to the Israelites long after they had been removed into captivity. God no longer tells them that they shall be *betrothed*, and remain in a state of trial many days; but, all this being accomplished, he takes them into the most intimate communion, saying, "I am *married* unto you." "Thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more; for thy Maker is thine husband."

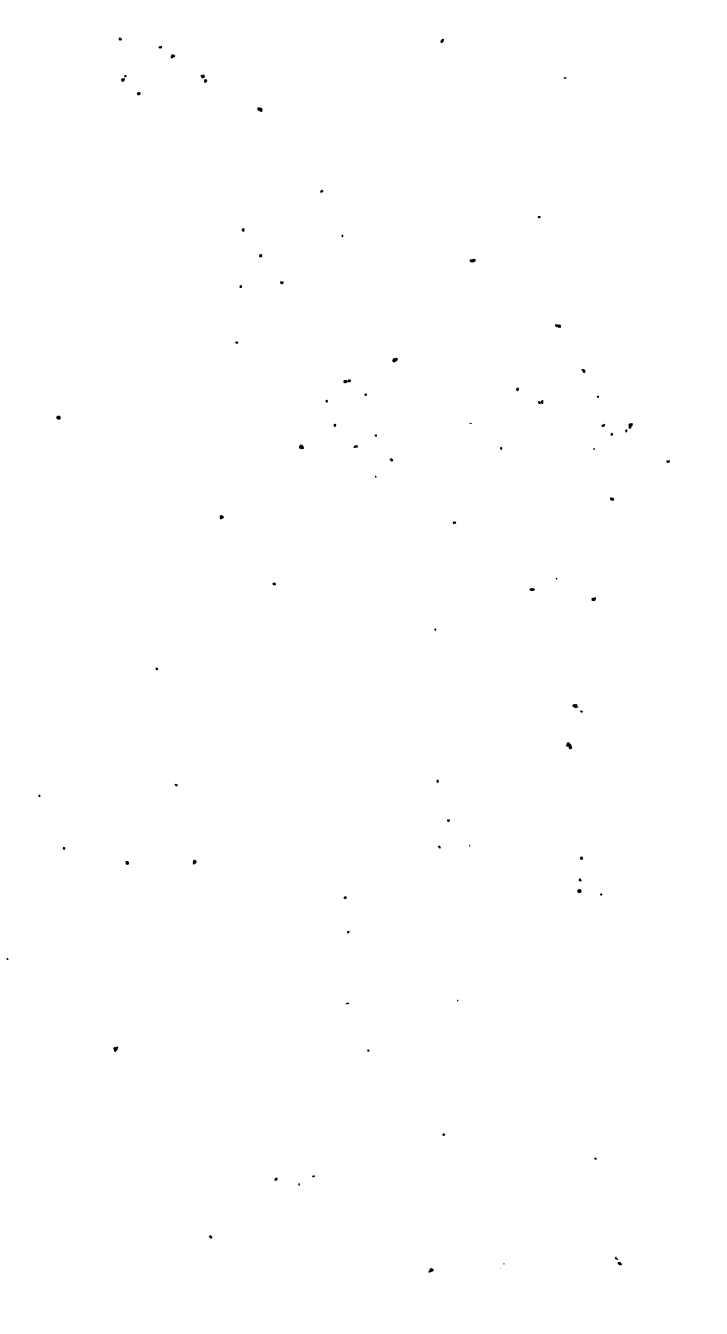
Hence we see that the captive Israelites were to be received into the Gospel covenant at an early period, but without any intimation that they would

\* Jer., iii., 14, 15.

become a spiritual church for a long time. We see, also, that, so far from there being any ground in this state of things for anxious concern or waning hopes respecting the rich blessings that have been promised in connexion with their final conversion (the consummation of the marriage relation), there is room for even more cheering anticipations than we have ever dared to indulge. Though dark clouds of ignorance and superstition now hover over them, soon shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Well may we exclaim, with the apostle, in view of God's wonderful dealings with his ancient people, "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counsellor? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

PART III.



## PART III.

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### THE SEALED REMNANT OF ISRAEL.

THE BIBLE contains not only the most authentic record of the past history of God's ancient covenant people, but also the only sure guide respecting their future prosperity. With its inspired pages we commenced our inquiries concerning the ten tribes, and to its testimony we have had occasion to refer at every step of our progress. We have found it "a light shining in a dark place," while, amid the obscurity of the long night of ages, we have sought and found the erring daughter of Zion, purified from her idolatry, waiting in her espousal covenant to be received into perfect fellowship with her Beloved.

Cheering intimations of her future glory, and of consequent blessings upon the Gentile world, have been given, and a prospect has opened before us adapted to inspire our hearts with sentiments of praise and adoration to Israel's God. These prospects impart to our subject its highest value, and with eager interest we seek a nearer view of the transporting scene.

In the development of Providence we may obtain such a view; for, while the Bible has been

our polar star, guiding to the discovery of the lost tribes, their history and present condition reflect back again the light with increased effulgence upon the pages of that inspired book.

This may be our apology, for proceeding to the examination of other passages, which the best commentators, unacquainted with these developments, have left in acknowledged obscurity. So long as it was unknown whether the ten tribes were in existence, or whether there was any remnant of the Hebrew-Christian Church to be found, how could the most profound exegetical skill determine the meaning of passages which we have quoted from the prophetic writings, but which are now comparatively clear ?

It is not my intention to enter upon an investigation of all of those prophecies which may yet be elucidated by the history and condition of the remnant of Israel ; but it is an inquiry of the deepest interest, whether the discovery of them may not throw important light upon the TIMES of the apocalyptic visions, and furnish a key to "the things which must be hereafter."

The tribes of Israel are brought to our notice in the seventh chapter of the Revelation. An angel is seen ascending from the *East*, having the seal of the living God ; and he is commissioned to seal a large number of the servants of God, or converts from all *the tribes* of the children of Israel.

“And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” Till this was done, the four winds of the earth, the messengers of destruction (Jer., xlix., 36, 37), must be stayed.

“*Sealing*,” says Fuller, “denotes, not conversion, but the *preservation* of those who are converted. Those who were sealed did not by this become the servants of God, but are supposed to be such already. Instead of signifying the enlargement of the Church, the object is to prevent it from being entirely swept away. It portends danger no less than the striking the door-posts of the Israelites when the destroying angel should pass through the land; or than the marking of those who ‘sighed and cried’ when Jerusalem was to be destroyed by the Chaldeans. It was for a preservation of a ‘seed for God’ amid the desolating judgments that were to follow. Hence, when those evils had already deluged the Church, we find the sealed servants of God standing in triumph upon Mount Zion, ch. xiv., 1.”—Fuller’s Works, vol. ii., p. 31.

We have reviewed the history of the preservation of the lost tribes, and have seen how a remnant has been preserved under “the seal of the living God.” But one of those tribes, the tribe



of Dan,\* is missing from the number; and the very omission of that name in the enumeration goes far to establish the fact that the literal Israel was the subject of the vision. That tribe, then, must be sought beyond the bounds of the Nestorian Church, or, at least, of the independent tribes. It may perhaps be found among the unconverted portion of Israel, or among the Yezidees, if the proof of their Hebrew origin shall be demonstrated. (See Appendix A.)

A sealed portion of the converts from the two tribes are yet to be found. Whether they have blended with the ten tribes, or are still distinct, is a problem yet to be solved. They may hereafter be discovered among the Jacobite Syrians on the west of the Tigris, or among the Christians of Travancore, or of Abyssinia. We have no evidence that they have obtained an asylum with their brethren of Israel in the Assyrian mountains, unless it be the fact of their existence, and that they have not yet been found. Until their separate existence shall be ascertained, we may regard the Nestorians as the existing Hebrew-Christian Church, and the representatives of the "sealed

\* This tribe took the lead in idolatry after the return of the Hebrew nation from Egypt, and was among its chief supporters after the revolt of the ten tribes.—1 Kings, xii., 30. Amos, viii., 14. Hence, on account of its idolatry, as has been supposed by some learned commentators, this tribe was excluded from the blessings of those who had the seal of God in their foreheads.

servants of God," "the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria."

In the prophetic allusions to the future state of the ten tribes, they are everywhere spoken of as a REMNANT. "The *remnant* of Israel, and *such as are escaped* of the house of Jacob;" "A *remnant* of them shall return." There are many intimations that Israel, in their long trial, were to become very much reduced in number, but God had solemnly promised not to destroy them utterly; and now we have a view of his plan of preserving a considerable number of those who were regarded as his true servants, that they might remain as witnesses for him. Hence an importance, irrespective of numbers, is attached to them in the visions of the inspired seer.

The angel who is intrusted with the arrangements for their preservation is seen "ascending from the EAST," the part of the world in which the scene is laid. And that portion of the earth has been the theatre of the most protracted and sanguinary persecutions which have ever deluged the Church. The Mohammedan empire rose into being on the blast of the fifth and sixth trumpets, which were introduced by the doleful cry of a thrice-uttered "wo to the inhabitants of the earth," and have hence received the significant appellation of the "wo trumpets." That the Saracen and Turkish powers were intended by the events

of the first two of these trumpets, is a point so generally conceded, and withal so clear, that it is quite unnecessary in this connexion to enter upon a formal proof of it.—Rev., ix.

In the language of a writer who has resided long in the East,\* “Christianity had ceased to exert its conservative influence, and society had become a putrid, fermenting mass, sending up a cloud of all monstrous forms of error, like the smoke out of the bottomless pit, which in time bred and sent forth the abominable doctrines of the false prophet, like locusts, unto whom was given the power of scorpions.” And they had power to hurt “those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads.”

Here the sealed servants of God are first introduced, and we are left to infer that special reference was had to the rise and persecutions of the Mohammedan power in the commission of the angel to “seal the servants of our God in their foreheads.” Through the long period from the rise of that power to the present day, the sealed remnant of Israel has been preserved from its desolating sway. During the continuance of the Saracen power, the Nestorian Church was widely extended through the East. The Seljukian conquerors were commissioned to kill with the sword. They swept everything before them, and all but the sealed servants of God were cut off.

\* Rev. Eli Smith, *Sermons and Addresses*.

If the reader will turn to the ninth chapter of the Revelation, he will be able to draw the parallel between the symbolical account there given, and the history of 'those who had the seal of God in their foreheads,' to whom such particular reference was made in the opening of the scene.

Having (in Rev., ix.) presented a short scenic view of the rise of Islam, the spirit of inspiration opens before us more fully the circumstances of the Church, and especially of the sealed servants of God, during the reign of this persecuting power. The tenth chapter is a solemn interlude in the great drama, in which a scene is presented that must remain unexplained till "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, *The mystery of God*" shall "be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

The eleventh chapter must therefore be regarded as immediately connected with the ninth. Whether the "*holy city*" (v. 2) denotes the literal Zion, or the Eastern Church, which was then a more numerous and important body than the Western, they are both alike trodden under foot of the Gentiles. But the more spiritual and favoured portion of the Church, represented by the "temple of God and the altar, and them that worship therein" (v. i.), were "measured," and form no part of "the court which is without the temple," and "given unto the Gentiles."

They were shielded, by having the seal of God in their foreheads, from the impending calamities which were falling so heavily upon those around them. We shall now find them acting an important part upon the stage under the designation of

THE TWO WITNESSES.—REV., xi., 3.

The servants of God, under both the old and the new dispensation, are called his *witnesses*. Of Israel he says, "Ye are my *witnesses*, saith the Lord, and my servants whom I have chosen," Isa., xliii., 10; "therefore ye are my *witnesses*, saith the Lord, that I am God," v. 12. "Ye are even my *witnesses*," xliv., 8. To his disciples our Saviour said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."—Acts, i., 8. See also ch. ii., 32; v., 32; and xiii., 31. Hence the witnesses in our text may be of the Hebrew or of the Christian Church, or of both. But in the next verse we have a more particular description of the witnesses:

"*These are the two olive-trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth,*" v. 4. This is the explanation. The witnesses are represented by the symbols of *olive-trees* and *candlesticks*: the one denoting the Jewish, the other the Christian Church, and together forming the Hebrew-Christian Church.

That the symbol of a candlestick represents the Christian Church, is placed beyond a doubt by the Divine Revelator himself, Rev., i., 20: "The seven *candlesticks* which thou sawest are the seven *churches*." And it is no less certain, that the olive-tree in other parts of the Bible, denotes the people of Israel or the Hebrew Church. Thus Jeremiah says to the Jews, "The Lord called thy name, A green *olive-tree*, fair, and of goodly fruit."—Jer., xi., 16. And the apostle Paul, Rom., xi., 17, calls them "the olive-tree." Here, by way of illustration, the Gentile Church is called a wild olive-tree. But surely no one will say that the *wild* olive, by itself unfruitful and worthless, is what was intended in Rev., xi., 4, especially as the Gentile Church is there *represented* by another symbol, that of "candlestick." In a few other places the figure is used for comparison. Of Israel it is said, "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be *as the olive-tree*," Hos., xiv., 6; and the Psalmist (perhaps personifying the Jewish Church) says, "I am *like* a green olive-tree in the house of God."—Psalm cxlii., 8.

In the book of Zechariah (ch. iv.) we find both these symbols introduced; and, if I mistake not, a careful examination of the chapter, in connexion with the preceding and subsequent ones, will show that they represent respectively the Jewish and Christian Churches; the one supplying oil to

feed the light which the other was to dispense to the world. By a comparison with ch. iii., v. 8, and vi., 14, it will appear quite evident that the building of the Temple by Joshua and Zerubbabel is highly typical of the erection of the spiritual temple by the promised Messiah; for the subject is introduced in the former passage by the declaration, "Behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH," &c.; and in the latter we are told, "Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even *he* shall build the temple of the Lord."\* It being thus made evident, that Christ and his spiritual temple the Church were here symbolized, it is natural to suppose that "the golden candlestick with his seven lamps thereon," which is presented to the vision of the prophet (ch. iv., 2), also denotes the Church, as we have seen this figure does in other passages of Scripture. The explanation given by the angel, that "they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (v. 10), is somewhat obscure; but it is made plainer by a comparison with ch. iii., v. 9, where, immediately following the annunciation of Christ under his name the BRANCH, we are told that "upon one stone"—"the

\* Every intelligent reader of the Bible knows that the mere artificial division into chapters does not in the least interrupt the connexion of different passages

stone which I have laid before Joshua"—“shall be *seven eyes*.” Now this stone for the spiritual temple can be no other than “the stone which the builders refused,” and which “has become the head of the corner,” the foundation upon which the whole superstructure rests; and, consequently, “the seven eyes” upon it, i. e., the candlestick and its seven lamps, signify the Church; the sacred number seven expressing its completeness, as the whole Church founded upon the rock Christ Jesus.

“Then answered I and said unto him, What are these two olive-trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again and said unto him, What be these two olive-branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves (or empty out of themselves oil into the gold)?” “Then said he, These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth,” v. 11, 12, 14.

Anointing was the act of consecration, or setting apart to the office of king, priest, or prophet, and was hence used figuratively to designate an appointment to any sacred or important vocation. Thus our Saviour, though not literally anointed with oil, being set apart by God, is said to be “*anointed* to preach the Gospel to the poor;” and Christians, being set apart to the service of



God, are also said to be anointed. "Now he which hath *anointed* us is God."—2 Cor., i., 21. "But ye have an *unction* from the Holy One." "The *anointing* which ye have received abideth in you."—1 John, ii., 20, 27.

The Jewish nation was especially set apart from all the nations of the earth for the service of God, to be his witnesses; to be the depositories of his revealed will to man; to bear the ark of his covenant; to bring in the Messiah, and to promote the knowledge and glory of God in the world. They were specially chosen and consecrated to this work under the most solemn covenants and obligations. Hence, in an emphatic sense, they may be regarded as "the anointed ones" standing before God; and, being divided into two separate kingdoms, Judah and Israel, they are called "the *two* anointed ones."\*

They are represented as supplying oil for the lamp of Christianity; and how true it is, since every page of the volume of inspiration, with its promises and threatenings, its prophecies and precepts, was written by the hands of Jewish penmen; and the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, and

\* The number *two*, as applied to the witnesses, appears to refer to the two divisions of Israel and Judah in the same manner as they do to the olive-trees in Zech., iv., 14. But if, as some have supposed, it refers to the numerical competency of the witnesses (Deut., xix., 15. Matt., xviii., 16), this sense is appropriate to the sealed converts of Israel and Judah.

even the Messiah himself, were all of the Hebrew race. Dark, indeed, would have been our condition without the oil with which these olive-trees have furnished the "golden candlestick" of the Church! In this connexion, what symbol could be more aptly applied to them than that of the olive-tree?

In every other place in the Bible, and we believe in this place also, the olive-tree personifies the people of Israel, and the candlestick the Christian Church. Hence the conclusion is unavoidable, that the Hebrew and Christian Churches are conjointly represented by these two symbols in the description of the two witnesses, Rev., xi., 3, 4.

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#### THE PROPHECYING OF THE WITNESSES.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand, two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth," v. 3. "He that *prophesieth* speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."—1 Cor., xiv., 3. "For the *testimony of Jesus* is the spirit of *prophecy*."—Rev., xix., 10. From these and numerous other passages in the New Testament, it is quite evident that to *prophecy*, under the Gospel dispensation, does not usually imply the power

of predicting future events. It is used rather in the sense of teaching, or preaching the Gospel, or of bearing "testimony of Jesus," in whatever manner it is done.

No people ever did this with more zeal and perseverance, or for a longer period, than the Nestorians. It appears, from historical records, that their missionary labours extended nearly or quite through the long period of twelve hundred and sixty years (the prophetic period of our text), a fact which enters into the history of no other people in the world. Their missions commenced long before the Mohammedan era, and from the third to the sixteenth century they sent their missionaries throughout the vast regions of Central and Eastern Asia, amid the wilds of Tartary, and through the vast empire of China.\*

"In the space of time allotted to the more active missionary operations of the Nestorians, the Western Churches sent the Gospel to the northern nations of Europe, where the providence of God has been more favourable to its perpetuity: to Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Norway, etc. But none of these missions were extended and protracted like the missions of the Nestorians."†

These missions, extended and protracted, as they

\* See History of the Nestorian Missions in *Appendix B*.

† Rev. Dr. Anderson's Account of the Nestorian Missions, *Missionary Herald*, v. xxxiv., p. 289.

were, beyond those of any other people, appear to have been mostly, if not entirely, sustained by the parent Hebrew stock of the Nestorian Church in and near their present places of abode. This appears from the fact, that most of those missionaries whose residence is given, including all of the numerous band sent forth by the patriarch Timothy, were from Assyria or its immediate vicinity. If some of the earliest of their missionaries went from the famous school of Edessa, the most of those who were educated there were from the east of the Tigris or Persia, in which the whole of Assyria Proper was then comprised. "Their churches in India," says the writer above quoted, "would find enough to occupy their time among the heathen of that great and populous country. Their churches in Arabia would have enough to do in that country and in Africa. The effective force, therefore, of the Nestorians, for their missions in Central and Eastern Asia, was within the sweep of a radius extending a few hundred miles from Assyria as a centre; and [with the exception of their mountain retreat] over this whole territory the Mohammedans extended their conquests and dominion at an early period. The missionary body of Christians which was planting the standard of the cross over the vast regions of Central Asia, is not, therefore, to be regarded as either numerous or powerful."

To show that they prophesied "in sackcloth" requires but a glance at their political condition, shut up, as they were, in their mountain ramparts, or holding their lives by an annual lease from the avowed enemies of the Christian faith. Their missions began and ended in persecutions, from which they often suffered in the long interim, both at home, and abroad in their missionary fields. The first of their missionaries whose name is given was driven to his field by the sword of persecution, like the apostles of old.

Early in the fourth century (in 330) many thousands of these Christians, with their clergy, were cruelly put to death by Sapor, the Persian king; and his successors, until the sixth century, or to the time of Mohammed, "sometimes severely persecuted all Christians resident in their dominions."\* The apocalyptic locusts then came up in greedy swarms upon their borders, and, though God spread over them the shield of his protecting providence, their sufferings from the general desolations of these devouring hordes were such that it may well be said they prophesied in sackcloth, since the followers of Mohammed claim a divine right to the liberty and lives of all unbelievers, enforcing their claims with the lash and the cimeter. "In the tenth century," says Mosheim, "the Nestorians and the Monophysites began to experience

\* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., v. i., p. 493.

more hardships under the Arabians than formerly; and they are said to have repeatedly suffered the greatest violence.”\* This was succeeded by the sanguinary sword of Mahmoud; and, finally, the Euphratean horsemen, commissioned with “fire, and smoke, and brimstone,” “to slay the third part of men,” swept away the last remnant of the Nestorian missions in the East, with their many thousand converts to the Christian faith.

“*And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.*”—Rev., xi., 5, 6. We have in this passage a remarkable specimen of the high poetical style which pervades this book; and it appears to contain a direct allusion to certain miraculous events recorded in other parts of the Bible. The first is to the memorable act of Elijah in calling down fire upon the successive companies of men sent to him by King Ahaziah, 2 Kings, i., 10, 12: “And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, *If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty.*” In testimony that he *was* such, God

\* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., v. ii., p. 158.

sent fire from heaven and destroyed this and the succeeding company ; and just so true is it ( would not the revelator say ? ) that these " witnesses " are also men of God. The prophet, by calling down fire from heaven, gave the strongest testimony that he was a man of God ; and now, by this reference to that event, are we not to understand the same of the witnesses—a strong figurative affirmation that they are men of God ? So, also, in the remaining clause of the verse there appears to be the same testimony given that they are *sent* of God, Num., xvi., 28, 29 : " And Moses said, Hereby shall ye know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works. If these men die the common death of all men, &c., then the Lord hath not sent me." By causing their instantaneous death in a miraculous manner, God set his seal to the Divine commission of Moses ; and when he says of his witnesses, " If any man hurt them, he must in this manner be killed," what are we to understand by it but a strong attestation that their commission is also from him, and that he would attend them with convincing evidence of this fact ?

In the first clause of the sixth verse there is a reference to the faith of Elijah, who, though he " was a man subject to like passions as we are, prayed earnestly that it might not rain ; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months."—1 Kings, xvii., 1. Jam.,

v., 17. Just so truly were the witnesses to be men of prayer and faith. In the remainder of this verse there is an obvious reference to the plagues of Egypt, of which the first in order is specifically named. One special design of these plagues was to reveal the character and attributes of Jehovah. "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt." And to Pharaoh said Moses, "Thus saith the Lord, *In this shalt thou know that I am the Lord*: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood." And again, "I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, *that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.*"—Exod., vii., 5, 17, and ix., 14. Now as Moses, by the exhibition of these plagues, made known the character and manifested the glory of the true God, so also would the "witnesses" do it by their appropriate means of bearing testimony for the Lord; and though the heathen should harden themselves against the truth, and finally perish like Pharaoh and his host, yet God would as truly be glorified as he was in that event. If this be not the general sense of these verses, I confess my entire ignorance of their meaning, since we have no evidence that any body of men, under the Christian dispensation, has either



predicted, or invoked, or wrought such judgments as are here specified. It is true that in the tenth verse we are told that "these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth;" but would not these very features in their character and office be a source of vexation or torment to their enemies? Possibly, too, there is an allusion in these passages to judgments which God would on their account inflict upon their persecuting enemies. But this could hardly be represented as the act of the witnesses themselves.

*"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them," v. 7.* THE DEATH OF THE WITNESSES was obviously to be something different from the cessation of their prophecy, since it was not to occur till after they had "finished their testimony," v. 7. We have traced the Nestorian missions from about the third century to near the middle of the sixteenth (A.D. 1540).\* If their missions began twenty years before the end of the third century, it gives us the full period of 1260 years, or prophetic days. But we do not know the precise period at which they commenced, nor whether this was the only sense in which the witnesses were to prophesy. The beginning of the Mohammedan era was the time when the Nesto-

\* See the Appendix.

rian missions began to be prosecuted with the most vigour, and this may be the epoch from which we should date the prophesying of the witnesses. If "the testimony of Jesus" is the *spirit* or *substance* of their prophecy, they are, in an important sense, bearing testimony for him at the present day, though in a more passive manner than during the long period of their zealous labours among the heathen. Dark as are the clouds with which wars and persecutions have overspread their horizon, they have cherished the light of the Bible, and a comparative purity of doctrine and practice. The lamp of vital piety, as we would hope, is not entirely extinguished in that venerable Church. But especially do their past history and present situation bear "testimony of Jesus;" and thus, it would seem, they continue to "prophesy, though clothed in sackcloth."

The opinion that the term of their prophecy has not yet expired is farther supported by its correspondence in duration with the "forty and two months" that the Holy City should be trodden under foot. If their testimony ceased with the termination of their missions to the heathen, we must conclude either that their death was not to follow immediately, or suppose, with Mr. Fuller, that the "three days and a half" (being half of the sacred number *seven*) is used for an indefinite period, instead of three years and a half, as is more gener-

ally believed; since it is quite certain that their rise is yet future.

What is to be understood by "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit" (v. 7), at the first view is not apparent, inasmuch as the same origin is assigned to Mohammedanism and the Roman beast of Rev., xvii., 8. The former, it is true, when first mentioned (Rev., ix., 1-3), is not denominated a *beast*; but as this is a well-known prophetic symbol, used to express a kingdom or dominion, the term is as applicable to Mohammedanism as to papacy. Moreover, it is believed that a review of the evidence in the case will establish the point, that the beasts mentioned in the thirteenth chapter are symbolical representatives of the Mohammedan government and religion. This question we shall hereafter briefly examine. The connexion appears to favour the idea that the Mohammedan beast is here intended; and, if so, we may naturally suppose that the death of the witnesses denotes their political subjugation, with its attendant evils, and perhaps sore persecution. Considering the care which God has taken to preserve their liberty, this would be a remarkable event. That this persecuting beast will make a final struggle against the Church in the East, it is not unreasonable to expect. Besides, such a conflict appears to be plainly intimated in the closing chapter of the book of Daniel, first

and seventh verses, where a time of great trouble is mentioned in immediate connexion with the downfall of the Eastern Antichrist, described in the preceding chapter:\* “And it shall be for *a time, and times, and a half*; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.”—Dan., xii., 7. “It shall be even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”

That the papal beast should gain the ascendancy, and reduce them to the idolatry of her image-worship, appears inconsistent with the terms of their espousal (Hos., iii.), in which they are brought under a solemn covenant to live free from spiritual adultery, and no more to defile themselves with idols. But these are points upon which it would be presumptuous to speak with much confidence till “the mystery of God shall be finished.”

The Romanists are at the present moment making great efforts to bring about such a result, and they have in my hearing spoken with confidence of ultimate success. The pope is sending out his emissaries, and numbers are now in the field or on its borders, preparing for a new and vigorous onset, with the avowed object of bringing over the whole Nestorian Church to the papal faith. But the great body of the Nestorians have for

\* For evidence that this relates to Mohammed, I must refer to such writers as Newton, Bush, and Keith.

centuries manfully resisted their attacks, and are still standing firm at their post, supported by the strong intrenchments of the Bible. And it would seem that they only need more of the armour of God to enable them to "withstand all the fiery darts of the wicked."

On the other hand, the independent Nestorians were perhaps never in greater danger than they now are of being brought under subjection to the *Moslem* powers, who have pushed their conquests among the Koords to the very borders of their mountain fastnesses; and into these, I have good reason to believe, they intend to penetrate. With the aid of their new subjects, the Koords, trained among the contiguous mountains, they will have advantages for the enterprise which they never before possessed. And if God withdraw his special protection, in order to let them pass again through the furnace, they will lose their distinctive national existence, and their dead bodies will remain exposed in the great city, which is a Sodom for her sins and pollutions, and an Egypt for her bondage and oppression. Their remaining exposed to public view (*v.* 9) is a strong figure of speech, to denote the indignity that will be heaped upon them by their enemies; exposure of the dead being regarded to the present day as the climax of odium and insult.

But their afflictions, however trying, will soon

be over, and they will be raised to seats of holy influence and heavenly serenity, where their enemies shall behold them, while scenes of terror and dismay shall overwhelm themselves, *v.* 11-13.

A brighter day now dawns upon the Church; the trump of jubilee, and the loud acclaim of the ransomed above, break upon our enraptured ears: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever!"

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THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS.—REV., xii.

This chapter appears to represent the circumstances or the situation of the witnesses, the Hebrew-Christian Church, during the period in which they were to prophesy in sackcloth; and the two following chapters are also to be regarded as a farther illustration of the same subject. "The reasons," says Fuller,\* "for considering these four chapters, not as one continued prophecy, but as a general representation of events of the same period, are the following: *First.* The events foretold by the slaughter and resurrection of the witnesses in *ch.* xi., by the flight of the woman into the wilderness in *ch.* xii., with the ravages of the beasts and the triumphs of the Lamb's company in chapters

\* Complete Works of Rev. Andrew Fuller, *v.* ii., p. 41.

xiii. and xiv., are the same. *Secondly.* These representations are not confined to one or two trumpets, but comprehend the greater part of them. Compare ch. xi., 19, with ch. xvi., 18. *Thirdly.* In each of these descriptions there is a reference to the twelve hundred and sixty years (the period which, in prophecy, marks the duration of the antichristian power). So long were the witnesses to prophesy in sackcloth, so long the woman to be in the wilderness, and so long the beast to make war with the saints."

In the first five verses of the twelfth chapter we have a retrospective view of the birth of the Messiah, preceded by the intense desire of the Jewish Church (expressed by the anguish of "a woman in travail") for his long-promised advent. That the "man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron" (v. 5), represents our Saviour, will appear evident by a reference to Ps. ii., 9, and Rev., xix., 15, where it is expressly said of Christ, "He shall smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron," &c. His being "caught up to God and to his throne" is a farther confirmation that he was the Son of God. If so, the "woman" must denote the Hebrew Church, or, at least, the pious part of it. Her attire appears to represent the resplendent panoply of the Gospel, with the apostolic wreath encircling her brow (see Rev., i., 20),

while her ancient rites and ceremonies—"the shadow of good things to come"—are now thrown beneath her feet as of no farther use (*v.* 1). It therefore seems that only the Christian portion of that Church was here intended.

The "*dragon*" is "that old serpent which is the devil and Satan" (*v.* 9, and ch. *xx.*, 2); and by his efforts to destroy the "man-child" is meant the opposition of the enemies of the truth generally, and of his servant Herod in particular (*Matt.*, *ii.*, 3-18). His "*seven heads*" may denote his numerous agents. "*Horns*" are the proper symbols of power. The *numbers* seven and ten, as in many other places, represent multiplicity or completeness.

From the rise of Christianity the inspired writer glances rapidly forward, through a long vista of time, to the exile of the church in the wilderness, the conflict with the powers of darkness, and the triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom (*v.* 6-11); and then back again to take another view of the persecuted daughter of Zion fleeing into the wilderness from the face of her great enemy the serpent (*v.* 12-14). It is still the Hebrew-Christian Church—"the woman which brought forth the man-child" (*v.* 13). But as this church, or a portion of it, had long been in the wilderness, how, it may be asked, could it be represented as flying there at a later period, and on the wings of



a great eagle? This apparent difficulty may be removed by considering, 1st. That they were not all in the wilderness, and of those who were there many had become dispersed abroad: 2d. That bearing them on eagle's wings (Ex., xix., 4) denotes the special providence of God in providing for their escape, rather than the distance they were borne: and, 3d. That the language fairly implies that they had long had an abode in this wilderness: "Where *she hath a place*" (v. 6)—"into *her place*" (v. 14). It was the "place prepared of God" in "the wilderness" for his Church of old (Hos., ii., 14). The manner in which she has been fed and nourished in this wilderness during the long night of Mohammedan darkness and tyranny we have already seen, and also how the earth helped the woman, while the serpent sent forth his legions, like a desolating flood, over all these lands, till the most of the Eastern Church has been swept away, and the remnant, except these "sealed ones," present a spectacle scarcely less pitiable than the deluded followers of the Arabian prophet. So successful has been the warfare which the dragon has waged "with the remnant of her seed" (v. 14-17).

What is intended by the earth opening her mouth to swallow up the flood is not clear; but if in any case the earth has helped the Church, it is in this.

REV., xiii. *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns (v. 1). And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb (v. 11).*

So intimately connected with our main topic is the question whether the beasts here brought to view denote the Eastern or the Western Antichrist, i. e., Mohammedanism or papacy, that I shall make no apology for entering upon its examination in this connexion. But I am met at the threshold of the inquiry by the prevailing opinion, that the latter, and not the former, is intended.

Nor is it surprising that Western Christians should regard the clearer light which illumines their horizon in these latter days as the sun and centre of all that relates to the interests of Zion in the world. The scenes of the reformation, opening like the dawn of a cloudless day upon the long and dreary night of papal ignorance and superstition, and the increasing light and activity of later times, have so completely occupied our vision, that we have almost lost sight of our now benighted brethren in the East, together with their Moslem oppressors.

But when the visions of the Apocalypse were first revealed, and for many succeeding centuries, the Eastern was the principal portion of the Christian Church, containing, as we find it still does,

the original Hebrew stock upon which the whole Gentile Church was ingrafted—a remnant of the *first-fruits*, preserved under “the seal of the living God.” Was it nothing in the view of “the Good Shepherd” what wild beasts came in to waste this purchased flock? Or is it not reasonable to suppose that he would reveal to his under-shepherds the character and duration of the chastisements in store for his erring sheep? Why, then, are ancient Babylon and Assyria made so prominent on the pages of the Bible? Is not the Mohammedan beast, regarded simply as a persecuting power, the staff of God’s indignation, with its *twelve and a half centuries of relentless warfare* waged upon the blood-bought Church of Christ, enough to secure a name and a place by the side of the recorded woes and final triumphs of that Church?

The first beast is introduced to our notice in the same manner as the four beasts in Daniel’s vision (ch. vii., 2), that is, rising at once out of the *sea*, or from the midst of the nations (v. 1; compare Jer., li., 42, and Isa., viii., 7). In the description given of him, there may be an allusion to the first three of those beasts, which were respectively compared to a lion, a bear, and a leopard. If by the allusion we are to understand that this beast is to occupy the same territory with those mentioned by Daniel, this is true of the Mohammedan pow-

ers; or if, as seems more probable, reference is had to the qualities or character of those beasts, the comparison is more strikingly true of the Mohammedan than of the Roman, or any other power. The leopard was regarded as the fleetest of animals (see Hab., i., 8), the bear possessed of the strongest feet, and the lion of the most powerful jaws or mouth. Such an animal was peculiarly fitted to represent qualities for rapid conquest and great slaughter; and so effectually was his power used, that Mohammed and his successors extended their conquests farther in eighty years than did imperial Rome in eight hundred! In this and his farther conquests and dominion, he was aided by the "power" of the dragon; and well might the prince of darkness (see ch. xii., 9, and xx., 2) give "his seat and great authority" to such a champion of evil, arrayed against the church of the living God (v. 2).

In the East, a man's rank or authority is known by the seat that he occupies; and to yield one's seat in favour of another is to yield his influence, just as to give up the king's seat is to yield the kingdom. Hence, when the dragon is said to give his seat to the beast, it is equivalent to owning him as his vicegerent or representative, implying that the beast would faithfully do the work of the devil.

The great power of the beast is particularly denoted by his ten horns (v. 1), the usual symbol of

power. As these horns are crowned, they denote his great regal authority ; and this has ever been exercised by the heads of the Mohammedan government. The seven heads represent the supreme rulers of the government. A man is the head of the household which he governs, a general the head of an army, a monarch of his dominions, and the pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Hence, if the beast represents the Mohammedan empire, the heads of the beast denote "the commanders of the faithful and successors of the apostle of God;" while this and similar pompous titles are the "names of blasphemy" inscribed upon his heads, since Mohammed assumed a supremacy over all the prophets, and even over the Son of God himself. The number seven would seem to denote the successive number of the heads during the continuance of the beast ; and it is worthy of remark, that the historian of the Decline and Fall gives an account of just seven principal successors of Mohammed, who figured in the establishment and growth of his empire, viz., Abubekir, Omar, Othman, Ali, Moawiah, Yezid, and Hosein. The violent death of one of these, Hosein, the son of Ali, who was treacherously murdered by the dissolute Yezid, Oct. 10, A.D. 680, occasioned such a wound to the beast as could only be healed by the permanent secession of a large body of "the faithful," which resulted in the formation of the

Persian Sheey sect, and thus "his deadly wound was healed," v. 3.\*

That "all the world wondered after the beast" is a fact that requires no comment. Nor, when we reflect with what fidelity they have served the author of all evil, is it a bold figure of speech to say that his numberless followers have "worshipped the dragon, which gave power unto the beast;" while they exalt the beast himself to the highest pinnacle of adoration, saying, Who is like unto the beast? *Who is able to make war with him?* v. 4.

The warlike nature of the beast, it appears from the whole description, is his characteristic feature. This was never more true of any power than of the Mohammedan. To say nothing of their other great warriors, "Omar, in ten years, reduced thirty-six thousand cities and strongholds to his obedience, and demolished four thousand churches or temples. In one hundred years after the flight of Mohammed from Mecca, the empire of his successors extended from India to the At-

\* "In a distant age and climate," says Gibbon, "the tragic scene of the death of Hosein will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader. On the annual festival of his martyrdom, in the devout pilgrimage to his sepulchre, his Persian votaries abandon their souls to the religious phrensy of sorrow and indignation."—Decline and Fall, ch. 50. Often has the author's commiseration been awakened by the sincerity of their grief, as he has seen them act over the tragedy of Hosein with all the enthusiasm of a passing reality. His death was a memorable incident in the annals of Islâm.

lantic Ocean, comprehending the widely-distant regions of Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain.”\* And what rivers of blood have not their conquering legions shed since Mohammed first drew the sword in support of his spurious faith! If any one doubts the blasphemous character of the Mohammedan beast, let him listen to his followers, while they ridicule, in terms too gross for repetition, the Sonship of the Messiah; or let him attend to the claims of Mohammed, to his visit to heaven, his communications with God, to the licentiousness of some of the peculiar doctrines of the Koran, which, under the pretended sanction of Divine authority, have so corrupted their conduct and polluted their hearts, that, in the language of one† who has been long conversant with them, “It is a wonder of mercy that God does not, in hot displeasure, rain upon their land fire and brimstone out of heaven, as he did upon the cities of the plain for similar abominations.” Is there no “blasphemy against God” in ascribing to him such a character? none against “his name” in heaping such contumely as they do upon his only-begotten Son, “in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily?” none against heaven and its holy inhabitants in making it a place of gross sensuality?

*“And power was given unto him to continue (or*

\* *Edinburgh Encyclopædia.*

† *Rev. Eli Smith.*

make war) *forty and two months,*" v. 5. If this be prophetic time, or the period of twelve hundred and sixty years, it has almost expired; and what are the signs of the times regarding it? In Persia it is commonly believed that the existing Mohammedan power is near its end. Calculations have been made by one of their seers, which lead them to believe that its days are numbered, and limited to a very few remaining years. In Turkey, in Mesopotamia, and even among the wild mountains of central Koordistan, where the subject was gravely canvassed, I found a prevailing impression that the arm of the Mohammedan power is soon to be broken; and such, too, is the general belief among the Moslems of Egypt and Syria. Moreover, such is the posture of things in the East, and such the increasing developments of Providence, that a general expectation of the speedy downfall of the empire of Mohammed prevails throughout Christendom; while those of us who have resided within the borders of that empire, have been sensibly impressed with the fact that we were the tenants of a falling edifice.

A missionary, long resident in the metropolis of Turkey, remarked that "it requires no prophecies to satisfy us that the Mohammedan power is falling to ruins, and must soon be at an end." The astonishing changes now taking place portend its



overthrow. The Moslem feels that "*Fate*" has so decreed it; and the Christian may here learn that the Almighty has set bounds to its duration, and that its days are fast hastening to a close.

During "forty and two months" the beast was "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them;" to "have extensive dominion, to lead into captivity," and "kill with the sword" (v. 7-10). How successful has been his warfare upon the Church, we have seen in part, while tracing the decline of the Nestorian missions, and the fall of her millions of converts scattered through the East. During the extension of his vast dominions from the Atlantic to the Indus and China, we have a sample of the spirit with which the followers of Christ were treated, in the contemptuous language of Caled, the redoubtable leader of the armies of Islâm: "Ye Christian dogs! you know your option: the Korân, the tribute, or the sword!"\* That the warfare of the beast was not prosecuted with a more compromising spirit at a later day, we learn from the career of the victorious Tamerlane, who lighted the flames of war and persecution over almost the whole area of the Eastern Church, and "caused the terror of his name to pervade Europe. Being persuaded, as the most credible historians of his life inform us, that it was the *duty* of every true Mohammedan to make war upon the Chris-

\* Gibbon's Rom. Emp., ch. li., p. 243.

tians, he inflicted numberless evils upon persevering Christians, cruelly *butchering some, and dooming others to perpetual slavery!*"\* If we must receive with some limitation the declaration that "power was given him over *all* kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (v. 7 and 8), still it was certainly never more true of any earthly power; for, besides extending his dominion over so large a portion of Asia and the most populous countries of Africa, he penetrated to the centre of Europe; his legions triumphed over the united chivalry of the Crusaders, and his "monarchs have for centuries sat upon the subverted throne of the Cæsars." What millions have bowed down to serve him, or to supplicate his cruel mercy! In Europe, Asia, and Africa, has he "made war with the saints, and overcome them;" and had not God in mercy interposed the sword of a Charles Martel, a Charlemagne, and other great warriors, we might have been groaning under the same galling yoke. Now that the horns of the beast have been *frayed* away (Zech., i., 21), we no longer regard him as such a fearful scourge. But how was it with those whose fathers and brothers were "killed with the sword," and whose wives and daughters were "led into captivity" more cruel than death? Such there are at the present day in Persia; Christian captives, torn from their peaceful homes within the

\* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.

last twenty years, and now bowing at the feet of the Mohammedan beast! But the sword shall return upon his own head. Long has he killed with the sword, and thus has Divine Justice decreed that he must fall. There is every indication that the arm of civil power will be broken and his bloody career arrested. What occasion for "the patience and faith of the saints!"

THE SECOND BEAST was in league with the first, and, consequently, contemporary with him. The first was of a peculiarly warlike aspect and character; this has a more unassuming appearance, but, nevertheless, has great influence and authority. Such is the relation of the Mohammedan HIERARCHY to the general government or monarchy which was embodied in the first beast. In Mohammed and his more immediate successors both of these functions were combined. But in process of time a distinct ecclesiastical organization arose, as the more immediate conservator of the religious faith. Its "coming up out of the earth" may allude to its gradual rise, like the growth of vegetation; quite unlike the sudden and imposing rise of the other "out of the sea."

The two horns appear to represent the two sects into which the Mohammedan faith is divided, the *Soony* and *Sheey*; for though a sacred number, as seven or ten, may be indefinite, not so with other numerical terms as ordinarily used by the inspired

writers. For example, the two horns of Daniel's symbolical ram (Dan., viii., 3) represented the two divisions of the Medo-Persian empire; and the four horns which came up on the Macedonian "goat" (v. 8) represented the four divisions into which the empire of Alexander was severed after his death. Now as the Mohammedan hierarchy, though essentially one, and resting on the same basis, is separated into two sectarian divisions with their distinct heads, we cannot but regard these as the "two heads of the beast." The warlike functions of Mohammedanism being vested entirely in the former beast, the peaceful character of the latter is denoted by the emblem of "a lamb;" but his true character is nevertheless exhibited by his language and the doctrines which he preached, "for he spake as a dragon."

As the depository and judge of Mohammedan law, and the acknowledged conservator of the faith of Islam, "he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him;" and so potent is the influence of the sacred character with which he is invested, that he has been known to set at defiance and countermand the edicts of the highest civil functionaries. But these are only rare exceptions to the general fidelity with which he supports the judicial authority. It is he who girds upon the imperial monarch the sword of state, and, by the allegiance which he inspires through the Koran,

and the promised blessings or threatened maledictions of the prophet, he may be said to cause the inhabitants of the earth "to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (v. 12), since the civil government is really the creature of the religious faith.

But what great wonders and astonishing miracles have been wrought by the Mohammedan priesthood to deceive them that dwell on the earth (v. 13, 14)? "*In the sight of the beast,*" or in the eyes of his followers, they have in effect wrought many. They have originated, or so given currency to reported miracles of their prophet, which could not otherwise have been credited, that it may be regarded as having been done by themselves. What has been the effect of such tuition upon the minds of the deluded multitude, we may learn from the following account of Gibbon: "The votaries of Mohammed are more assured than himself of his miraculous gifts, and their confidence and credulity increase as they are farther removed from the time and place of his spiritual exploits. They believe or affirm that trees went forth to meet him; that he was saluted by the stones; that waters gushed from his fingers; that he fed the hungry, cured the sick, and raised the dead; that a beam groaned to him; that a camel complained to him; that a shoulder of mutton informed him of its being poisoned; and

that animate and inanimate nature were equally subject to the apostle of God." He visited the seven heavens, and "performed in the tenth part of a night the journey of many thousand years. \* \* \* \* His resistless word split asunder the orb of the moon; the obedient planet stooped from her orb in the sky, accomplished the seven revolutions around the Caaba, saluted Mohammed in the Arabian tongue, and, suddenly contracting her dimensions, entered at the collar, and issued forth through the sleeve of his shirt!"\*

These are a specimen of the wonderful miracles by which the beast has "deceived them that dwell on the earth:" and they have not ceased to be practised to the present day. During the author's residence in Persia, thousands were led away by the accredited miracles of a certain Moollah on the banks of the Arras, who was said to have miraculously healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, and done other wonderful works; and so great was the excitement of the votaries of Mohammed, that the Russian authorities deemed it necessary to send the Moollah into exile in order to restore tranquillity. Miraculous cures are believed to be wrought at the tombs of revered Moslem saints; and there is now living in the city of Ispahan a man of such reputed sanctity that the devout Mussulmâns even gather up the dust of his

\* Decline and Fall, ch. l.

feet, and ascribe to it miraculous sanative powers.

“*The image of the beast*” which he caused to be made, and inspired with life, speech, and destructive power (v. 14, 15), may seem an enigma of no easy solution on our hypothesis of the beasts, since the religion of Mohammed is as free as that of Christ or of Moses from the idolatrous worship of “any graven image, or of any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath.” But let us see what the term *image* usually signifies, as employed by the sacred writers. “And God said, Let us make man in our *image* ;” “in the *likeness* of God made he him ;” “Christ, who is the *image* of God,” etc. Thus we say of a child, “She is the *image* of her mother.” Hence it appears, that to make an image of the beast is to institute a likeness or resemblance of him ; to make something of a similar nature, character, and functions “to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” That beast has his seat in Turkey. His counterpart or “IMAGE” is to be found in the modern kingdom of Persia. The beast with the two horns occupies both of these seats. So long as his office was embodied in the first beast, Persia was regarded as a part of the domain of the latter ; and long did her princes acknowledge allegiance to the caliphs who succeeded to the royal and sacerdotal

officers of Mohammed, and were, for a time, the most absolute monarchs in the world.\* But as the spiritual and temporal power became more distinct, this affinity was weakened.

The great revolutions occasioned by the conquest of Persia by Genghis Khan, the subversion of the caliphate by his grandson Hulakoo, and the events of the sixth trumpet, together with the career of Tamerlane, left the Persian empire entirely distinct from, and independent of, the acknowledged successors of the prophet, or the heads of the original Mohammedan beast in Turkey. But still it was a Mohammedan kingdom; the imperial crown was placed upon the brow of her sovereigns by the Moslem hierarchy, and the civil arm was supported by the second beast, who commanded universal allegiance under the penalty of inevitable death (v. 15). Though disunited, it corresponded in all respects to the original beast; and so strong was the resemblance that it might well be called "an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live." Equal homage was demanded for the beast and his image (v. 8 and 15), and it is equally received by both; homage in language and manner, such as we may almost

\* "The office of the caliphs, uniting spiritual influence with temporal power, bore a striking resemblance to that of the pope; and in their pomp, their haughtiness, and their oppression, little difference can be traced between the vicars of Mohammed and the successors of St. Peter."—Edinburgh Encyclopædia.



fancy might be offered by a worm to the Ruler of the universe\* (v. 12-15).

TO RECEIVE A MARK IN THEIR FOREHEADS (v. 16, 17) was to seal his votaries as the followers of the beast. Thus God commanded to "*set a mark upon the foreheads*" of his faithful servants, to denote them as his own and under his special protection (Ezek., ix. 4, 6). He "*sealed the servants of God in their foreheads*" for the same reason (Rev., vii., 3); and we find his true followers standing in triumph with the Lamb, "*having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*"—Rev., xiv., 1. These are all represented as having "*a mark in their foreheads,*" to indicate that they are his, just as the shepherd marks his sheep for the same purpose. Hence we conclude that the "*mark in their foreheads*" indicates those who receive it as the followers of the beast. Now if this is the meaning of the mark in the *forehead*, "*to receive a mark in their RIGHT HAND*" must represent something which is common to all the rest of the subjects of the beast; since "*he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive*" one or the other of these marks. This may refer to the odious *haradg*, the price which every

\* The author has more than once seen sheep killed in sacrifice (for such was the term) to princes of the royal family of Persia, and the dismembered heads thrown under their horses' feet; and to the king still higher marks of homage, or, rather, *adoration*, are offered.

unbeliever is obliged to pay for his head, for the privilege of living, if life can be called a privilege under such circumstances. The "option" was "the Koran, the *tribute*, or the sword."\*

If it be asked how this can be called a mark in the *hand*, the answer is found in the latitude of signification in which the "hand" and the "right hand" is figuratively used throughout the Bible. The right hand also labours to obtain the money, and pays the annual *haradg* to the Mohammedan master; and, unless the native Christians, or other unbelievers, carry "a *mark* in their right hand" to prove that this tax has been paid, they may have to pay it over again. In the language of a late writer, "Their only protection, *the only consideration for which the Koran allows the toleration of their existence, is their money*; which, either by legal or arbitrary exactions, is made to flow into the treasury of the government, or into the pockets of its officers, about as fast as they can earn it. In fact, they are called, in the language of the country, *rayah*, which means a flock; it is

\* To those who may still think that the *mark* refers to the sign of the cross made over the forehead by the Roman Catholics, we would remark, that the Mussulmans also mark their foreheads by pressing them upon a cake of sacred earth from Mecca, or on some other object, in time of prayer, and they have other more expressive marks. But all such signs must prove very fallacious, as is evinced in the case of the cross, which is also made by all the Eastern Christians; and hence this sign would identify them with papists.

pastured for the sake of its fleece.”\* A profession of their faith in the Korán would at once relieve the rayah from the haradg, and emancipate him from vassalage; it would transfer the mark from his hand to his forehead.

Of the mystical “*number of the beast*” we shall offer no explanation; but, instead of engaging in speculations upon a mystery which has occupied so many wise heads to so little purpose, we will invite the reader’s attention to one or two more reasons for believing, that the two beasts of this chapter have no relation to the Church of Rome.

I. The appropriate name of the corrupt and *idolatrous* Church of Rome is that given to it in the seventeenth chapter of the Revelation, verses 1 and 5, viz.: “THE GREAT WHORE—THE MOTHER OF FORNICATIONS† AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH!” Throughout the whole history of the Jewish Church, in her most awful departures from God, and in the most horrible depths of idolatry and pollution to which she ever sunk, she is never denominated a beast; but, in dark contrast with the spotless purity which should ever characterize the Church of God, she is called by the more odious appellation of an adulterous woman. The true Church of Christ is called “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” Idolatry throughout the Bible is

\* Rev. Eli Smith, Sermons and Addresses, p. 19, 20.

† Marginal reading.

called adultery ; and what, then, can we call an idolatrous church if not by the name given it both in the Old and New Testament Scriptures ? The true Church is also called the Holy City. *Babylon* was noted for its idolatry and wickedness, and for enmity to the people of God. The Romish Church sustains the same character, and holds a similar relation to the true ; it is therefore with great propriety denominated **BABYLON THE GREAT**. It is also called **MYSTERY** from the hidden depths of its iniquity, and in contrast to the clear light of pure Christianity. So far there is an obvious natural comparison between the true and the idolatrous church. But the moment the latter is called a beast the antithesis is lost, the gender is changed, and the whole becomes obscure.

II. A *beast* is the symbol of the Gentile nations, and of the open enemies of the Church. It is never used to denote a corrupt Church. It is of the opposite sex, and cannot be called a harlot or lewd woman. On the other hand, the open enemies of the Church are never called by the latter appellation, though they are represented as taking the place of her Head when she has become corrupt, as in the alliance of papal Babylon with "the beast and kings of the earth."

III. There is a want of unity in the description of the beasts of the thirteenth chapter and the Roman beast of the seventeenth. They agree, it

is true, in the number of their heads and horns, which are also the same with those of the dragon; but these are indefinite scriptural numbers, so that their agreement in this respect by no means proves them to be the same. In the description of the Roman beast, the heads are said to be "seven mountains on which the woman sitteth;" in the other, "one of the heads was wounded to death," which could not be affirmed of one of the mountains. In the former the horns were all crowned when the beast arose out of the sea; in the Roman beast they are represented as "kings who had received no kingdom as yet." The one is *full* of names of blasphemy; the other has them only on his heads. One is scarlet-coloured; the other made up of the leopard, bear, and lion. The Roman beast derives his chief importance from his servile connexion with the "scarlet woman;" the other is of himself a most wonderful, warlike, and powerful animal, and so far from being second in consequence to the beast with two horns (which has been supposed to be identical with the woman), the latter labours to subserve the interests of the former. Of these, the first beast makes war with the saints. In the other case, it is the *woman*, and not the beast, who is "drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs" (ch. xvii., 6). "In *her*," not in him, "was found the blood of prophets," &c. (ch. xviii., 24.)

Before dismissing this subject, we must beg leave to introduce one more proof that the beast of the 13th chapter and Mohammedanism are the same. The evidence is found in a comparison of the seven trumpets and the seven vials (ch. viii., ix., and xvi.). The angels commissioned with the seven last plagues "pour out the vials of the wrath of God" upon the same places and objects that were affected by the blast of the seven trumpets, and in the same order: the first upon the earth; the second upon the sea; the third upon the rivers and fountains of water; the fourth upon the sun; \* \* the sixth upon the river Euphrates; the seventh into the air. So far there can be no doubt of the identity of the localities; and where six out of seven in the same order correspond, it is quite obvious that there was unity of design throughout.

By general consent it is admitted that the fifth trumpet introduced Mohammedanism (ch. ix., 1). The fifth vial was poured out upon the seat of the beast (ch. xvi., 10); and hence we infer that the Mohammedan power and the beast are the same.

But let us put the conclusion to a farther test by a brief examination of the events of the fifth and sixth vials (ch. xvi., 10-14). Perhaps no country in the world will answer to the events represented under the fifth vial so fully as Turkey. Regarding the imperial city as the more immediate seat of the beast, I need only point to the scenes of anarchy and

blood which disgraced that great metropolis anterior to the destruction of the Janizaries, and during the dark and stormy night in which they were swept from the earth. But there is another of their plagues which is mentioned in very remarkable language: "their sores."—Rev., xvi., 11. The term is introduced under the first of the seven vials: "and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." It will be remembered that these vials are denominated "the seven plagues" (ch. xv., 1, 8). Now it is a very remarkable fact, in this connexion, that a disease of peculiar type prevails in the Mohammedan countries (and is confined almost exclusively to them), so grievous and destructive that it is emphatically called THE PLAGUE. Its beginning, and progress, and termination are chiefly characterized by its "sores."

"Their noisome and grievous sore" is the first distinctive symptom of plague, and often follows the unhappy sufferer long after the general disease has passed by. Search the records of all the ills that flesh is heir to, and this dreadful malady will be found pre-eminent for its mortality. Year after year it sends the voice of wailing among the hapless subjects of the Mohammedan beast, and its victims must be estimated by millions.

• But while the Moslems charge it all upon God,

or to resistless Fate, and "gnaw their tongues for pain," they "repent not of their deeds." From these judgments poured out upon "the seat of the beast," we infer the identity of the Mohammedan power, which arose under the fifth trumpet, with "*the beast*" of the fifth vial. And this we cannot doubt is the same as the beast of the thirteenth chapter.

"*And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.*" As "the Euphratean horsemen of the sixth trumpet are universally allowed to symbolize the rise and progress of the Ottoman empire,"\* so also the drying up of the Euphrates under the sixth vial is no less commonly believed to represent its decline and fall. There exists the same relation between this and the preceding vial that there is between the fifth and sixth trumpets. The scene is the same, and the same beast is concerned in the events of both of these vials. Now it is an old maxim, that "a man is known by the company he keeps," and we here find the beast making his appearance in the same company which attended him in the height of his power. Of the identity of "*the dragon*," that "old serpent called the devil," who had such confidence in the efficient co-operation of the beast as to "give him

\* Bush on the Millennium, p. 214.



his seat and great authority," there can be no doubt. It appears, from his character and office, that the *false prophet* is the same as the beast with two horns.

That the Moslem hierarchy is a *false prophet* or teacher, no Christian will question; and so pre-eminently was this the character of the primitive head of this hierarchy, that he has ever received the appropriate title of **THE false prophet**. It is evident that the title is not confined to Mohammed as an individual, for it is applied to him and his successors until the time of the final decline and fall of his religion.

From his hostility to the Christian religion, and from his control of the civil power, he at first received an appellation not so significant of his ordinary office as the one which appears to have been afterward assigned him. But that the false prophet is really the same personage with the one which performed such wonderful miracles before the beast (ch. xiii.), is very evident from the allusion to these astonishing feats in the account of his final doom (ch. xix., 20): "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image." Compare ch. xii., 12-15. If this point be established, there appears little room to doubt the identity of the beasts of chapters xiii., 1, and xvi., 10, 13.

THE KINGS OF THE EAST correspond to the two witnesses; and the beast, in each instance, is mentioned in connexion with the sealed remnant of Israel. The followers of Christ are more than once in the Revelation called "kings;" and the term is not inappropriate to the sons of Israel, who are denominated the Lord's "Anointed" (Ps. cv., 15). In the prophecy of Isaiah (xi., 15, 16) we are told that the Lord would dry up the river (Euphrates) to prepare "a highway for the remnant of his people" Israel. As the final accomplishment of that prediction is future, while the prediction itself entirely corresponds with the events of the sixth vial, we cannot but infer that they both relate to the same people. For who of God's servants, under Mohammedan domination, can with so much propriety be called "the kings of the East" as "the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria?"

Oppressed as they have been for so many centuries by their Moslem foes, to them especially must the drying up of the symbolical Euphrates be a most important and auspicious event; an event that is rapidly hastening on, as all the signs of the times clearly indicate.

REV., xiv. "*And I looked, and lo, a lamb stood on Mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*" A brighter prospect now opens

before us. The warfare of the beast has ceased; the resistless current of the Euphrates is dried up; the way of the kings of the East is prepared; the daughter of Zion is released from her exile in the wilderness; the witnesses have laid aside their sackcloth; and now we behold them, still wearing in their foreheads "the seal of the living God," standing with their great Deliverer, and attuning their harps and voices to the sweetest song of heaven.

Faithful to the terms of their espousals (Hos., iii.), they have ceased to defile themselves with idols; and He who in solemn covenant had said, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever, in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies and faithfulness" (Hos., ii., 19, 20), has now received them, as the "virgin of Israel," into the most intimate union, henceforth to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." This evidently relates to the future.

Through the whole period of eighteen centuries since their conversion to Christianity, the Nestorian Christians have remained pure from the defilement of image-worship. It is only at a recent day that Protestant Christendom has separated itself from the universal idolatry which pervaded the Western in common with the Eastern churches. So that of the Nestorians emphatically, and of them alone (if we except, perhaps, the disciples in

the Alps), can it be said, "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins."

"These were redeemed from among men, *the first-fruits* unto God and to the Lamb." This is language which can be predicated of no others than the members of the Hebrew Christian Church. Salvation was first proclaimed to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and it was not till numerous converts had been gathered in from the two divisions of Israel and Judah that any one thought of preaching to the Gentiles. In no sense, then, can the latter be called "the first-fruits" of the Gospel. But "*Israel* was holiness to the Lord, and *the first-fruits* of his increase" (Jer., ii., 3). So also the converts of Israel are called by the apostle James, in his epistle to the twelve tribes, "a kind of *first-fruits* of his creatures." Paul also claims for them the same relation to the Church, where he says, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the *receiving* of them be but life from the dead? For if the *first-fruit* be holy, the lump is also holy." In the economy of grace, special provision was made to gather in and preserve these first-fruits of the great harvest from the field of God's ancient husbandry.

Reference is here made to a well-known ordinance of the Jews, which required them to collect

and consecrate to the Lord a small portion of the fruits of their fields before they gathered any for their own consumption. The first-fruits announced the beginning of the harvest ; a joyful occasion, which was observed as a season of general festivity by the Hebrew nation. Thus, when the first-fruits of the Church were brought in, at the beginning of the Christian dispensation, it was the commencement of a general harvest which was speedily gathered throughout the known world. So, also, we have reason to believe, will the ingathering of these "first-fruits" usher in the final and more glorious harvest of the Church. Were there a remaining doubt that such will be the result, or, in other words, that the Nestorian Church is to exert an important agency in the conversion of the world, let that doubt be removed by the flight of the next herald through the ethereal vault : " And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come" (v. 6, 7). The triumphant response now breaks upon the ear, " Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ? for thou only art holy ; for all nations shall come and worship before thee ; for thy judgments are made manifest" (ch. xv., 4).



Another angel then proclaims, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," unable to endure the resplendent brightness (see 2 Thes., ii., 8), and Zion's King appears in majesty Divine, swaying the sceptre of the world.

If this be not the dawn of the millennial Sabbath, it is at least "the preparation before the Sabbath." If we are to believe that the period of the seventh millenary is to be the Sabbath of the world, we should not forget that the Jewish Sabbath, from which the analogy is drawn, had its *preparation* on the afternoon of the previous day, in which all the remaining labour of the week was finished, and that the season of sacred rest began with the setting sun. Upon this hypothesis we must conclude that the work of the world's conversion will be fully accomplished before the end of the present thousand years, now so nearly expired. Hence it is time for the preparation of the millennial Sabbath to begin. And certainly it must be near, if there be any truth in our foregoing conclusions, and if the period of twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days has any relation to the Mohammedan Antichrist or the Nestorian Church. This period must either denote literal days or an equal number of years; since neither reason nor analogy will allow us to regard it, repeated as it is in so many forms in relation to the same series of events, as an indefinite number. Literal days it certainly

cannot denote, while representing the continuance of the Mohammedan power. We have several examples in which days represent the same number of years, and this is the sense in which, as commentators are generally agreed, the thousand two hundred and threescore days of Daniel and the Apocalypse must be received.\* The precise time in which this period will terminate we shall not presume to define, though a near approximation to it may certainly be made. It may be safe to assume that the period commenced no later than the *Hegira* (A.D. 622), when Mohammed first began to propagate his religion by the sword, and entered upon that system of sanguinary persecution which has given him such a conspicuous place on the pages of Divine inspiration. This is the period which begins the Mohammedan era, and the "forty and two months" of his warfare upon the Church. Within ten years from that time his legions carried their resistless arms through Persia, and trampled under foot the whole primitive seat of the Nestorian Church, with the exception of "her place in the wilderness." So unlike the insidious growth of the Romish apostacy was the sudden rise of the beast out of the sea, that there is no danger of mistake as to the time of his origin. But in attempting to fix the period of his downfall,

\* See an able article on this subject in the *Biblical Repository* for July, 1840.

it becomes a problem whether we shall compute time by the exact solar year; or with the Jews, reckon thirty days to a month, and thus make the year to consist of three hundred and sixty days; or with the Moslems, by lunar months and years, keeping pace with the common record of their era. In favour of the former method of reckoning, astronomical accuracy alone can be urged. But this we know is little regarded by the sacred writers, where it does not harmonize with the received notions of the age. Previous Scripture usage may be adduced in support of the second position. In favour of the last it has been argued, that it is most natural to reckon according to the current time of the people with regard to whom the prediction is uttered, and that such has been the principle adopted in relation to the prophecies respecting the Jews.

Without presuming to define the precise time when this eventful period will close, we are constrained to believe that it is so near that many, perhaps very many, now on the stage will share a part in the closing scenes.

“ Yes, we trust the day is breaking,  
Joyful times are near at hand.”

In the language of a personal observer\* of the grand movements in the East, “ The field is every day getting more ready for the chariots of salva-

\* Rev. Geo. B. Cheever, New-York.



tion to move upon, and the great Head of the Church is selecting his ground, posting his armies, and occupying fortresses for the last great conflict with the powers of darkness. In all political movements in the East, whether of peace or war, of open strife and agitation, or of secret intrigue, in armed bands, or in the wiles of diplomacy, God's purposes are working. It is not possible to travel in the East and not feel the stir of the great preparation.

'The hum of either army stilly sounds!'

The wings of angels on their errands almost brush past you in the air, and you hear their voices.

"It is not possible to look upon a more sublime spectacle than that which rises to the mind of a spiritual observer at the present crisis. A voice like the archangel's trumpet is crying, Cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard to the people! Event rolls on after event. Nothing in haste, but all with an awful deliberation and grandeur, becoming Him with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day. As the purposes of God are advancing nearer to their completion, ten thousand significant events sweep onward in the train. The convergency of all things to the point becomes more and more rapid. Meaning begins to appear in events before shrouded in mystery. An omnipotent plan, it is manifest, is in operation, and the

trains laid with Divine wisdom are fast completing. They connect, it has well been said, with piles of combustible material all over the world; it is only for the fire of heaven to fall upon them, and suddenly the whole scene will be lighted up with a transcendent spiritual glory. The way is preparing for a nation to be born in a day; when the materials are once in readiness, there is no reason to suppose that the world's conversion may not take place suddenly, with great rapidity. The preparation being made as before the coming of Christ in person, the Lord whom we seek shall, as then, suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom we delight in. *I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land, saith the Lord of Hosts; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come."*

H H



## APPENDIX.

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[A.]

### THE YEZIDEES.

THE first evidence I shall adduce in support of the position that the Yezidees are of Hebrew descent, is their practice of that remarkable rite of the Abrahamic covenant, *circumcision*.

This rite they must derive either from a Hebrew or Mohammedan origin. If this practice were derived from the Moslems, it would connect the religion of those who observe it with that of Islam; but in the case of the Yezidees, that it was not derived from their Mohammedan neighbours, is sufficiently evident from the fact that they circumcise their children in infancy, and do not, like the Mohammedans, defer it until they are thirteen years of age. This rite, then, as it is practised by them, furnishes very strong evidence of their Hebrew descent.

2. The second proof is derived from the practice among the Yezidees of offering *sacrifices*. This practice enters largely into their religious observances, and is strongly marked by Jewish peculiarities. This is seen particularly in the time and frequency with which they make their offerings, as well as in other Jewish rites which accompany the observance.

3. Farther proof of their Hebrew origin is found in their observance of the Passover. They observe this remarkable festival of the Jews annually on the 24th of the month Nisan. Those who are unable to procure a lamb for the sacrifice are permitted to offer some other clean animal. In the absence of the written directory, it must be expected that in some things they would depart from the ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual. Still there is enough in the circumstances of the observance to show that it must relate to the Passover of the ancient Israelites.

4. Another argument to prove their Hebrew ancestry may be

drawn from their *abstinence from meats prohibited to the Jews*. This abstinence is practised in connexion with *Hebrew rites*, and with none of the customs peculiar to the religion of Islam. This fact furnishes satisfactory proof that the practice has an *Israelitish origin*.

5. The last source of proof to which I shall have recourse in this connexion is the *testimony of ancient Syrian authors*. In the works of several authors, the fact is said to be stated, in various forms, that the *Yezidees* are of Hebrew descent. But the only volume in which I have seen the statement was in the possession of the patriarch Mar Shimon. It is called the *Gesserbusamé*, and contains about a thousand folio pages, and was written A.D. 1353, at which time the transcriber says the Nestorian patriarch was residing at Bagdad. From *Assomani*,\* it appears that the patriarch was there at the time of the capture of the city by a grandson of Genghis Khan, A.D. 1258. How much greater antiquity belongs to the work is not known. It is ascribed to one *Serebukét*, who appears to have compiled it from various older writers. The author states that the *Daeni* (the name by which the *Yezidees* are called by themselves and their Christian neighbours) were one of the sects or divisions of the Hebrews. The bare statement of this fact by so early a writer, corroborated as it is by the other proofs adduced in the case, goes far to establish the conclusion that the *Yezidees* are of the posterity of Israel.

That the *Yezidees* belong to the ten tribes rather than the two, is shown by the following considerations:

1. They originated in the country to which the Assyrian kings carried the ten tribes. Their reputed founder and their earliest religious teachers resided in Assyria. It is in this country, too, that are found their ancient sacred places of resort. To these places they make pilgrimages, however distant may be their residence.

The first place in Assyria to which the ten tribes were transplanted was *Halah*. We have shown elsewhere, from high au-

\* *Biblioth. Orient.*, vol. iv., p. 625.

thority, that Halah is the same as Calah, Gen., x., 11. Ephraim of Nisibis, and other later Syrian writers, are of the opinion that Calah is the present Hatareh, which has long been the chief town of the Yezidees. It is situated twenty-five or thirty miles north-northeast of Mōsul, above the ruins of Nineveh. The inspired historian places between Nineveh and Calah, *Resen*, which the Syrians call Reshaina, or, as it signifies in their language, "head of fountain." Now we find at the present day between Hatareh and Nineveh a place called Ras-ul-ain, an Arabic word having the same meaning that Reshaina does in Syriac. By removing the article "ul," it retains precisely the radicals found in the name Resen. These circumstances go far to show that this place is the Resen of the Scriptures. This point being established, it would greatly confirm the testimony which is given by the respectable Syrian writers I have just quoted, that Calah and Halah were the same as Hatareh, which for centuries has been the headquarters of the Yezidees, and in the vicinity of which the main body of those Nestorians reside who have become papists.

Again; some of the Yezidees were from the region of Gozan, the central part of the Nestorian country. The patriarch and other intelligent Nestorians informed me that the Yezidees left Tiyâry within the last twenty-five years, and that, at a somewhat earlier period, others removed from Tehöbee, to join their brethren in Hatareh, and in the mountains of Sinjar. Thus it appears that while the main body of the Yezidees originated in Western Assyria, or Haleh and its vicinity, others came from Central Assyria, the country of Gozan, and in both instances from the midst of the Nestorian Christians.

Besides, the country of Dasen, from which the Yezidees derive their name, Daseni, was situated on the Assyrian side of the Tigris, near Mōsul. The extent of country included under the name Dasen is not definitely known. But as Dasen was once a diocese of the early Christian bishops, it would embrace, even though the bishopric were of a moderate size, the present sacred places of the Yezidees. This circumstance gives sup-

port to the comprehensive sense given by the Nestorians to the term *Dasezi*, and also supplies an additional argument to prove that the Yezidees originated in the land of the captivity of the tribes of Israel.

Further proof of their common origin is furnished by the testimony of the Nestorians, that the Yezidees were formerly connected with their church. Their testimony is strengthened by the remains of Christianity which the Yezidees still possess. But the Jacobite Syrians also claim that they were once members of their church. This apparent discrepancy, however, is easily explained, on the ground that the defection of the Yezidees from the general Church took place before the schisms which divided the Nestorians and the Jacobite Syrians.

But it may be objected that, however strong is the evidence that the Yezidees are a part of the posterity of Israel, that the remains of Sabianism which they possess militates against that idea. It will therefore be necessary to examine this point; for if we find among them heathen as well as Hebrew customs, we may still be in doubt as to their real origin, unless a satisfactory explanation can be given.

The remains of the Sabian religion found among the Yezidees are a recognition of a good and an evil principle (the angels of light and of darkness), their reverence of fire as a sacred element, and worshipping before the rising sun.

When the sun first appears above the horizon, the Yezidees prostrate themselves three times in apparent adoration, with "their faces towards the east," and they kiss his first rays when they strike on a wall or other object near them.\* They never spit in the fire, nor extinguish a candle with their breath, lest they should pollute or show disrespect to the sacred elements of fire and light. The angel of light they call *Mulek Taouk*, and he is represented by the figure of a cock placed upon a candlestick; that bird being the harbinger of day. This

\* Mr. Forbes, who visited the Yezidees of Sinjar, states that "they adore the sun as symbolical of Jesus Christ."—*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society for 1836.*

Figure is said to be exhibited but once a year for purposes of religious worship.

Zoroaster, the founder, or, rather, the reformer of the Magian religion, introduced the principle of one supreme God, who created both light and darkness, the deities of the elder Persians, and was superior to them both: that there were two angels, the one of light, the author of all good; the other of darkness, the author of all evil; and that between these two angels there is a perpetual struggle, which will continue to the end of the world. He gave the holy fire from heaven as the true *Shechinah*, and his followers worshipped towards this and the rising sun. Their sacred fire was never extinguished, and never blown upon with the breath. It was fed only with clean wood, and kindled by pouring on oil and by blasts of the open air.—Prideaux's *Connexion*, v. i., p. 390, 392.

We have already remarked that the Yezidees believe in one supreme God; and in all the other first principles inculcated by Zoroaster we have found a striking resemblance in the corresponding parts of their religion.

How came the Yezidees by these first principles of the Magian religion? Were they followers of Zoroaster, and, at the same time, the children of Israel? Were any of the captive Israelites among the ancient Magi, who bowed down to worship the orb of day? We have, in another connexion, shown from the pages of Eusebins, that some of the Hebrews to whom the apostles first preached the Gospel were at that time sunk in idolatry, and converted from the worship of dumb idols to the service of the living God; and where was it more likely that these should be found than among the ten tribes which were driven away from the land of their fathers on account of this very sin? Their golden calves were gone, and what is more natural than that they should embrace some other medium through which to offer their devotions? But in the land of their exile, what could they do? Forsaken by the prophets of the Lord, they would almost unavoidably sink still deeper in ignorance, while time and distance would wean them from the gods



of Bethel and Dan, and from the groves and high places of Samaria. But in the land of their fathers they had learned to worship the hosts of heaven, and these shone as brightly here.

While they are in this state, a man of genius and learning comes among them, proclaiming for their acceptance a religion captivating in its form and rites, lenient in its requisitions, and appealing to their conscience and affections, holding up the worship of the God of their fathers with the sanction of the revered name of Abraham. He professed to restore to them the religion of the patriarch in its primitive simplicity, purified from all those defects, abuses, and innovations which the corruptions of after times had introduced into it. The sacred volume which he gave them he called "the book of Abraham."\* He repeats in this book substantially the history of the creation and the deluge; and in it his followers are reminded of their first parents, Adam and Eve; of Joseph, of Moses, and Solomon, of whom he speaks in the same manner that the Scriptures do; and most of the sublime effusions of the sweet Psalmist of Israel are restored to them in the pages of the sacred Zendavesta; while, at the same time, the venerable seer inspires their hopes by a remarkable prediction of the promised Messiah. Now who could this renowned teacher have been, if he were not a Hebrew educated and brought up in the religion of the Jews? and for whom was he modelling his system, and supporting it by such names as we have given, if not for the children of Abraham, among whom he was then living? What I have here said of Zoroaster is grave matter of history, which is to be found in the pages of the learned Dean Prideaux (vol. i., p. 392-399), and other more ancient writers; and the learned scholar can consult the Zendavesta itself, the authenticity of which appears to be established by the researches of later days.

Zoroaster also introduced tithes, and regulated the orders and

\* The Persians at this day call the Zendavesta of Zoroaster one of the books of Abraham.

support of his clergy after the model of the Jewish Church. This is a farther evidence that he was himself a Jew, and forming a system of religion for a people of Hebrew descent. For what other people could he have introduced so many Jewish peculiarities, or made such an appeal to the name and religion of Abraham! The Gentile Medes knew little of the Jewish religion. The other Scripture characters which he makes prominent are likewise such as were dear to Israel. With the Books of Moses they would be interested as containing their own early history; and to the Psalms of David, from which Zoroaster drew so largely, they had tuned their harps in the days of their brightest glory.

Whether, in ingrafting the religion of Moses upon a heathen stock, there was a direct design to suit it to the superstitious and rites of the Gentile Medes of that age, or to the indoubtable attachment of the captive Israelites to some system of idolatry, or whether Zoroaster had himself embraced the worship of the heavenly hosts which prevailed in Jerusalem before the Babylonian captivity, is not evident. The suggestion has been made, that the vision of Ezekiel, in which men appeared "worshipping the sun towards the east," may have had reference to the religion of Zoroaster, deriving its origin from the Jews. If this be true, it favours the idea that a portion of the Israelites were to be the subjects of that religion, since the Gentiles, who had always lived in idolatry, would not thus be presented in prophetic vision.

Prideaux adopts the opinion that Zoroaster was brought up and educated in the Jewish religion, and that he was a disciple of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or Daniel; which concurs with the testimony of the learned Nestorians, taken from their ancient writers, that he was a servant and pupil of the first of those contemporary prophets, while his doctrines bear the strongest testimony to a Hebrew origin.

That Zoroaster first made his appearance and disseminated his doctrines in Media, where the captive Israelites then resided, is a fact too well established to require us to enter into the

proof of it at this time; and that it is now generally believed that he made the city of Ooroomiah\* his headquarters, has been already stated. The spread of his religion in Assyria, which had then become a part of Media, and the deep root it took in that part of the country of the ten tribes, where the religion of the Yezidees first originated, are also well-known facts. From its extensive diffusion in other parts of the Medo-Persian empire, we may reasonably infer that it was more or less propagated through all the districts of the Israelites, unless it may be the more inaccessible parts of Adiabéné. And it seems not improbable that the King of Adiabéné, who is reported by Josephus as a convert to Judaism, was a native Israelite reclaimed from the general apostacy. That he was only a local dependant governor is obvious from the fact that Adiabéné was then a province of the Parthian empire; so that there was nothing incompatible in his political character with the supposition that he was a son of Israel. Helen or Helena, who reigned in the middle of the first century of the Christian era, and who was queen of that country, was a Jewess. She went up to Jerusalem, as we are told by Eusebius, and consecrated large sums of money to the relief of her suffering brethren during the famine under Claudius Cæsar, mentioned in the book of Acts. It is probable that this king and queen held about the same relation to the posterity of the ten tribes in Adiabéné under the Parthians, that Herod and Agrippa did to the Jews of Judea under the Romans.

But supposing the ten tribes, as a body, never embraced the doctrines of Zoroaster, can we believe that a system of religion so well suited to their known disposition, appealing to their best natural feelings as the children of Abraham, of so attractive a character, and endeared by the name and authority of the father of the faithful and of Israel's God, made no converts among

\* The name, as given us by ancient writers, is Ormus, Ormi, Urmi, Ourmia, Ormida † &c.; and it may have its derivation from the god of light, Ormida, or from Or, light. Prideaux makes "Ecbatana (Tauris) or Xix" the place of his residence. Tauris is another name for Tabreez, which is near Ooroomiah, and Xix may have been the ancient name of the latter city.

that people? Let those who assume that, while all the world were moved by this wonderful teacher, the sons of Israel all stood aloof and rejected his doctrines, explain as best they can the complex system of the Yezidees, together with its origin and history. If it be admitted that a portion even of the children of Israel embraced the Magian religion, we naturally look for their posterity among those of them whose *language*, sentiments, and rites most resemble those of the ancient Persians among whom that religion was nationalized. This language is the Koordish, spoken by the Yezidees at the present day. At the same time, the explanation of their use of this language, different as it is from that of their Nestorian and Jewish brethren, is doubtless to be found in their religious history.

In the singular religion of the Yezidees we have found some of the prominent rites and sentiments of Magianism, Christianity, and Judaism, and the reader will judge of the force of the evidence and the justness of our conclusion, that they were successively Hebrews, Magi, and Christians. One form of religion has been ingrafted on to another, till finally all have become blended or absorbed in the heresy of Manicheas, which readily took root in such a soil, and, under the culture of his disciple Adde, grew into the anomalous form in which we now behold the faith and practice of the reputed worshippers of the prince of darkness. As in the idolatry which caused their expulsion from the land of Canaan, so in that of the Oriental philosophy, they doubtless continued the national rite of circumcision, and they may have continued to offer some forms of sacrifice nearly corresponding to the Passover and other religious offerings of the Jews. An intimate acquaintance with their social and domestic customs would no doubt discover other peculiarities which they have handed down from their Jewish forefathers. Had they been more thorough converts to the Christian religion, and remained longer under its influence, they would doubtless have lost the first of these Hebrew customs; but their retention of it is not singular, when we remember with what tenacity the Hebrew converts clung to their ancient rites, and how early their

minds were darkened by the dogmas and heresies of corrupt teachers. How soon these blind leaders began to trouble the Church, we learn from the first epistle of John; and, if we can rely upon the testimony of Augustin, that his epistle was written especially to the Parthians, it would seem that the Yezidees may have been led into error almost as soon as they embraced the truth.

I might indulge in some reflections upon the singular chapter in the history of God's covenant children which this people present; but, having taken the reader a long, and, as I fear, a tedious round, I dare not trespass farther upon his patience; and I conclude by asking, Shall this class of our fellow-men still be left to grope on in their dark courses of superstition and error, with none to direct their feet into the paths of life, to hold out to them the lamp of salvation? What Christian would not deny himself many a luxury for the privilege of imparting the Gospel to such a people?

[B.]

HISTORY OF THE NESTORIAN MISSIONS.\*

*Third, fourth, and fifth centuries.* So extensively had the Christian religion been propagated in the East as early as the fifth century, that the Nestorian patriarchs sent metropolitans or archbishops as far as to China, which implies the existence of bishops, priests, and churches, and that Christianity had been established in the country for a long time. Arnobius, who wrote in the *third* century, mentions expressly the *Seres* as among the Oriental nations who had embraced Christianity, and Mosheim regards these as having been undoubtedly Chinese. And if the religion of Christ then prevailed in China, we may infer

\* This short sketch of the Nestorian missions is taken chiefly from an account drawn up by one of the secretaries of the American Board, and published in the *Missionary Herald* for August, 1828. I have often borrowed the language of that writer, and used his references to authorities. Other quotations are introduced from Mosheim and Gibbon, while much is omitted that is contained in the above-named historical account.

that it did so, to some extent at least, in the intervening countries of Tartary.\*

In the year 334, Barabae, a Nestorian who had fled into Khorassan to escape the persecution of Sapor, the Persian king, became bishop of Maru, which office he held fifteen years.† And in 430 a metropolitan was sent to that place by the patriarch Jaballah, making it evident that there were then bishoprics and numerous Christians in that province.‡

*Sixth century.* "The Nestorians," says Mosheim§ under this date, "after they had obtained a fixed residence in Persia, and had located the head of their sect at Seleucia, were as successful as they were industrious in disseminating their doctrines in the countries lying without the Roman empire. It appears from unquestionable documents still existing, that there were numerous societies in all parts of Persia, in India, in Armenia, in Arabia, in Syria, and in other countries, under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Seleucia during this century. \* \* \* The Persian kings were not, indeed, all equally affected towards this sect; and they sometimes severely persecuted all Christians resident in their dominions."||

*Seventh century.* "The Christian religion was in this century diffused beyond its former limits, both in the eastern and western countries. In the East, the Nestorians, with incredible industry and perseverance, laboured to propagate it from Persia, Syria, and India, among the barbarous and savage nations inhabiting the deserts and the remotest shores of Asia; and that their zeal was not inefficient appears from numerous proofs still existing. In particular, the vast empire of China was enlightened by this zeal and industry."¶

This, it will be noticed, was the century in which Mohammedanism arose, and was so rapidly and extensively propagated by the sword; and the second year after their conquest of Persia,

\* Hist. Tart. Eccl., p. 8, 9.

† Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 485.

‡ Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 477.

§ Eccl. Hist., v. i., p. 493.

|| Assom., Bib. Orient., v. iii., p. 100, 407, 411, 449; and v. iv., p. 72, &c.

¶ Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., v. i., p. 499.

the "year 636, forms an epoch in the history of the Nestorian missions. At that time a Nestorian missionary is said to have entered China in the person of Olepuen, or Jaballaha, and from that time to the year 781 (beyond which the record does not extend), no less than seventy missionaries, whose names are preserved, laboured in that empire. The Emperor Coecum, who reigned from 650 to 684, commanded Christian churches to be erected in all the provinces of China. The Gospel was promulgated in ten provinces of the empire, and all the cities were supplied with churches." In the year 699, the Christians were persecuted in some of the provinces; and either there were two persecutions, or this was continued till the year 719.\*

*Eighth century.* About the year 714, the patriarch Salibazacha is affirmed by the Syrian writers to have sent a metropolitan into China. About 719, two able and active missionaries, named John and Kielie, arrived with some associates, and in 745 another, named Kieho.

The emperor had a church of his own, which he adorned with the statues of his ancestors. In the year 757, the Emperor Socum ordered a great number of churches to be erected. The mission continued in the same prosperous condition during the reign of his successor, A.D. 763-780.†

The patriarch Timotheus, whose name will be preserved by the church of Christ, again revived the missionary zeal of the Nestorians. He was from the convent of Beth-Aben, in Assyria, from which a new light was to stream forth upon the vast central and eastern regions of Asia. In 778 Timotheus selected from Beth-Aben a monk named Subchaljesu, who was skilled in the Syrian, Persian, and Arabic languages; and, having ordained him a bishop, sent him to preach the Gospel to the Dailamites and the Gelsæ, on the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea. At the same time, he wrote letters to the King of the Tartars and other princes, exhorting them to embrace the Christian faith. Subchaljesu repaired to his field of labour, and preached

\* Hist. Tart. Eccl., p. 2. Append., p. 4-28. Assemani, Bib. Orient., v, iv., p. 64, 778.

† Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 568.

the Gospel in many cities and villages, made numerous converts, built churches, and instituted priests and teachers. Leaving the new converts to be farther instructed by his associates, he penetrated to China, and published the Gospel extensively among the Gentiles, the Marcionites, and Manichæans, attacking every sect and every corrupt religion. As he was returning to Assyria to see his patriarch and former companions, he was murdered by barbarians. Timotheus, without delay, ordained two other monks from the same convent as bishops, and sent them to supply the place of the fallen missionary. These took with them fifteen monks from their convent, seven of whom, with the approbation of their patriarch, they afterward ordained as bishops. Their names were Thomas, Zaccheus, Semus, Ephraim, Simeon, Ananias, and David. Some of these went to China, and David became metropolitan of the churches in that country. Thomas is said to have gone with some associates to India.\*

*Ninth century.* "The Nestorians in particular," says Mosheim, "and the Monophysites, who lived securely under the protection of the Arabians, were very attentive to their own interests, and did not cease from efforts for the conversion of the nations still in pagan ignorance."†

Timotheus was relieved from his zealous labours by death in 820.

Two Arabian travellers found Christians in Masina or Southern China in this century; and a certain Baichu, revolting from the emperor, is said to have massacred a great number of Christians in the city of Canfu or Cantón, A.D. 877.—Bib. Orient., vol. iv, p. 524.

*Tenth century.* "All are agreed;" says Mosheim, "that in this century the state of Christianity was everywhere most wretched, on account of the amazing ignorance, and the consequent superstition and debased morals of the age, as well as from other causes. But still there were not a few things which may be placed among the prosperous events of the Church. The Nestorians living in Chaldea introduced Christianity into Tar-

\* Bib. Orient., v. iv., p. 444, 478, 483.

† Eccl. Hist., v. ii., p. 118.



tary proper, beyond Mount Imans, where the people had hitherto lived entirely uncultivated and uncivilized."<sup>\*</sup>

Mosheim, with others, thinks the Gospel which they preached was not in all respects free from error, but he admits that "the activity of this sect, and their great zeal for the promotion of Christianity, deserve praise."

"It is placed beyond controversy," continues Mosheim, "that the kings of the people called *Carith*, living on the borders of Cathai, whom some denominate a tribe of Turks, and others of Tartars, constituting a considerable portion of the Moguls, did profess Christianity from this time onward, and that no inconsiderable part of Tartary or Asiatic Scythia lived under hisopment among them by the pontiff of the Nestorians."<sup>†</sup> The history of this race of Christian kings, afterward so celebrated in Europe under the name of Prester John, is properly referable to the two succeeding centuries.

*Eleventh and Twelfth centuries.* The first of these Mogul princes (whose subjects were about two hundred thousand) resided in Caracorum, nearly six hundred miles northwesterly from Peking or Pekin.‡ He was baptized by priests sent out by the Nestorian patriarch. The son and successor of this king commenced an expedition in 1046, which, directed and impelled at a later period by the master spirit of Genghis Khan, proved so destructive to Asia and Europe. He advanced as far as Cashgar, about sixteen hundred miles; and the third in succession is described as a conqueror on the fields of Transoxiana and Persia. The last of the race was slain by Genghis Khan, about the year 1202. In the reign of the second Prester John, A.D. 1064, the Nestorian patriarch is said to have sent a bishop to China.

"In Tartary and the adjacent regions," says Mosheim, "the activity of the Nestorians continued daily to gain over more people to the side of Christianity; and such is the mass of testimony at the present day, that we cannot doubt but that bishops of the highest order, or *metropolitans*, with many inferior

\* *Ecc. Hist.*, v. 2., p. 122.

† *Ib.*, p. 124.

‡ *Gibbon's Rom. Emp.*, v. 4., p. 266.

bishops subject to them, were established at that period in the provinces of Cashgar, Nuacheta, Turkistan, Genda, Tangut, and others. Whence it will be manifest that there were a vast multitude of Christians in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in these countries, which are now devoted to Mohammedanism or the worship of imaginary gods. That all these Christians followed the Nestorian creed, and were subject to the superior pontiff of the Nestorians residing in Chaldaea, is so certain as to be beyond controversy.\*

*Thirteenth century.* "Although that powerful emperor of the Tartars, or, rather, of the Moguls, Genghis Khan, and his successors, who had carried their victorious arms through a great part of Asia, and had conquered China, India, Persia, and many other countries, greatly disturbed and distressed the Christians resident in those countries, yet it appears from the most unquestionable testimony that numerous bodies of the *Nestorian Christians were still scattered over all Northern Asia and China.*" †

The molestation of the Christians here adverted to by Mosheim appears to have been mostly incidental to the violence of war, rather than to any persecuting disposition in Genghis or his immediate successors, who are said to have favoured the Christians. Two of his sons, under the influence of their zealous mother (a daughter of Prester John), made a profession of the Christian faith. ‡ One of the more remote descendants, who became a Mussulman, and assumed the name of Ahmed Khan, commenced a violent persecution of his Christian subjects in Persia in the latter half of this century. § Kublai, a grandson, and the most distinguished successor of Genghis Khan, completed the conquest of China, A.D. 1279, || and removed his court to Chambalu or Peking. He encouraged Christianity, and favoured its professors. About this time, a Nestorian by the

\* Mosheim's *Eccles. Hist.*, v. ii., p. 161.

† *Ib.*, p. 319.

‡ Gibbon's *Rom. Emp.*, v. iv., p. 249. *Hist. Aart. Eccles.*, p. 40.

§ Malcolm's *Hist. of Persia*, v. i., p. 422-441.

|| Du Halde's *Hist. of China*, v. ii., p. 250.

name of Simeon was sent as metropolitan to China, and he was succeeded by Jaballaha.\*

The papal missions to the Moguls and Chinese commenced in this century; and Corvino, who was sent out by the pope in 1290, describes the Nestorians as having departed greatly from their religion, and so very powerful in China that they would not allow Christians of any other denomination to erect churches, nor to publish their own peculiar doctrines.† Marco Polo, who travelled through Tartary into China in the reign of Kublai, says he then found Nestorian churches in Cashgar, Carkam, Tangut, Erginul, Kerguth, and Tenduk.‡ Kublai died in the year 1302.

*Fourteenth to the sixteenth century.* Early in the fourteenth century Mohammedanism had gained the ascendancy in Hyrcania, Khorassan, and Transoxiana; and the Nestorians, Jacobites, and Latins were obliged to retire before it. Already had it been extended beyond its former limits in the East by the zealous Mahmoud of Ghizni, who ascended the throne of Persia A.D. 997, and is supposed to have converted millions by his sword. He made several expeditions into India, and also repeatedly contended in battle with the principal ruler of the Tartar tribes on the north of his kingdom.§ The sword of Tamerlane only was wanting to complete the destruction of the Western Tartar churches. This was drawn upon them about the year 1380. Tamerlane extended his conquests into Mongolia, India, Persia, Asia Minor, and Russia. He died A.D. 1405, after commencing his march for the remote regions of China.||

From this time we hear no more of the churches of Transoxiana, Turkistan, Hyrcania, and Khorassan, and multitudes of the Nestorians of Persia did this fierce disciple of Mohammed persecute unto death.¶ But their missions still existed.

In China the witnesses continued to "prophecy," though in

\* Assamiani, *Bib. Orient.*, v. iv., p. 107.

† *Ibid.*, p. 528.

‡ *Bib. Orient.*, v. iv., p. 503.

§ Malcolm's *Hist. of Persia*, v. i., p. 233.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 450.

¶ Mosheim's *Eccl. Hist.*, v. ii., p. 417.

deep sackcloth. The Romish missionaries were banished from that empire about the year 1369 ; but the Nestorians, though persecuted by the Chinese, and suffering under inauspicious influences which gradually diminished their number, were permitted to remain. The patriarch Simeon sent a metropolitan into Southern China in 1490. About this time India and China were united in one metropolitan see.\* In 1502, the patriarch Elias sent four bishops—Thomas, Jaballaha, Denha, and James—into India and China. James was living in 1510. In 1540 a persecution was raised in China against the Nestorians.

“It thus appears,” says the writer from whose valuable pages we have drawn so freely, “that the Nestorian missions in Central and Eastern Asia continued from about the third to the sixteenth century. The more active periods of their missions were from the seventh to the middle of the thirteenth century : a long period of time, evincing great perseverance, and showing, one would think, that the true spirit of Christ must have been, at least, one of the grand actuating motives, though the Gospel which they preached was not in all respects the pure Gospel.”

The patriarch and his people, during my late visit to the mountains, often spoke of the early labours and success of their forefathers, and eagerly drank in the encouragement I presented to put forth untiring efforts and prayers for a return of those golden days, when, as they themselves say, their missionaries, churches, and schools were spread throughout the East, even in India and China ; remnants of which they confidently believe may yet be found in those remote lands. In the bold, independent bearing of the Nestorians of the mountains, I saw abundant evidence that they were the true sons of “the missionaries of Balkh and Samarcand,” who, according to the testimony of Gibbon, “pursued without fear the footsteps of the roving Tartar, and insinuated themselves into the camps of the valleys of Imaus and the banks of the Selinga.”

If, in the early age of the Church, according to the same writer, “In their progress by sea and land, the Nestorians entered

\* *Bib. Orient.*, v. iv., p. 522.

China by the port of Canton and the northern residence of Singan," and were found in great numbers on "the pepper coast of Malabar and the isles of the ocean, Socatora and Ceylon," what may we not hope from their dauntless courage and untiring zeal, when the power of the press and all the increasing means of modern times are brought to their aid! My soul is fired in view of the prospect.

But then there is a great preparatory work to be done, and there is no time for delay. We must not shrink back in view of difficulties and dangers. If the Nestorian missionaries "pursued without fear the footsteps of the roving Tartar," we must without fear enter their mountain fastnesses, pour the light of life around their pathway, arouse and direct their dormant or perverted energies, and, under the Captain of our Salvation, lead them forth to conquest and to victory.

No effort must be spared, no time should be lost. Men of giant-like faith and energy must gird themselves to the work. Everything combines to render this field one of the most important and interesting of which we can possibly conceive. The early history of the people, their relative geographical position, their present character and eagerness for instruction, their adherence to the word of God as the rule of their faith and practice, and the portentous signs of the times in these lands, indicating some momentous crisis, in which a host of faithful soldiers of the cross should bind on their armour and prepare for the approaching conflict. Motives the most weighty, and encouragements the most cheering, urge us onward.

[C.]

#### JEWS OF MEDIA AND ASSYRIA.

WE have incidentally spoken of an unconverted remnant of the Ten Tribes dispersed through the Nestorian country, and it may be well to give a more particular account of them. They are said to excel their neighbours of the two tribes in general morals, and particularly in the virtue of chastity, which is held

in high estimation by them, while the Jewesses in other parts of Persia (as we are told by Mr. Wolff, who draws the comparison) are a very dissolute class. In their toleration of Christianity they excel any other Jews that I have seen ; and, on the principles already advanced, we might reasonably look for this in the posterity of the ten tribes. They not only gladly receive the Scriptures of the Old Testament at our hands, and enter with a degree of seriousness into discussions of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to the Messiahship, but some of them have come to us with no other errand than to obtain the New Testament in Hebrew, that they might examine for themselves this all-important subject. And when we have been obliged to defer their request till we could obtain copies from Constantinople or Smyrna, they have gone away expressing deep sorrow. On one occasion I lent two of them a copy of the Hebrew New Testament, telling them they might return it within a certain time. They accordingly brought it back, but with the petition that they might retain it still longer, as they wished to read it more thoroughly. Like the Jews in other parts of the world, they have been looking for the Messiah to make his appearance the present year (1840), and this may have led them to more serious reflection on the subject. Some of them have avowed their belief that the Messiah had already come, but with this singular explanation : that he had come and remained eight days, when he was circumcised, and received back again into heaven, whence he would soon come to reign on the earth, and gather together the remnant of Israel and the dispersed of Judah to reign with him at Jerusalem. Others have said that the Messiah had come, and afterward, as if afraid they had said too much, have explained it away by saying that *our* Messiah had come, but not theirs. It would seem, from these incidents, that they are beginning to question the principles of their unbelief, and to entertain fears lest they are rejecting the only Saviour.

In this state of mind, they meet with a great stumbling-block in the conduct and principles of professing Christians about them. They have repeatedly asked how it is that these Chris-

tians make religion to consist so much in stated fasts and other observances not commanded in the gospels. Many of the Jews of Ooroomiah have expressed a wish that we would open a school for the instruction of their children, and have expressed a willingness to have the New Testament read as a class-book in the school. It seems not improbable but this last measure would meet with opposition from some quarter. The petition, in its present form, amounts to a request that we would teach their children the Christian religion, and we think much might be hoped from judicious efforts for the improvement of this people. That something should be attempted for them, at least in connexion with our labours for the Nestorians, I cannot entertain a doubt; nor is there a question of their need of instruction and of the word of God. Above all do they need the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, to make that word effectual to the salvation of their souls.

Their dispersed situation would perhaps be an objection to the commencement of a mission exclusively for them at present; but one or more individuals, who should direct their attention particularly to their improvement, would find enough to do, at least in itinerary labours.

THIS UNCONVERTED REMNANT OF THE LOST TRIBES appears to possess much of the characteristic simplicity of the Nestorian Christians among whom they live; and, excepting the latter, I know of no people in the East who, considering my comparatively limited acquaintance with them, have won more upon my affections than they have done.

In common with the Jews in other parts of the world, they are a despised and persecuted race; and they are not exempt from the calumnious charge which is brought upon that people, of killing the children of their Gentile neighbours, to obtain their blood to mingle with the bread of the Passover!\* During my

\* As groundless as this accusation doubtless is, it seems as though it was sent in judgment upon the Jews for bringing this very charge upon the early Christians, who met in the night for worship "for fear of the Jews;" when the latter, in their implacable hatred to Christianity, accused them of killing children and drinking their blood!

residence in Ooroomiah, a Jew was publicly burned to death in that city by order of the governor, on an allegation of that pretended crime! Naphtha was freely poured over him, the torch was applied, and the miserable man was instantly enveloped in flame! In Meshed, another city of Persia, the same accusation was last year brought against the Jews of that place: a Mohammeden child having been missing, no one knew how. It was charged upon the poor Jews, and their entire extermination was at once resolved upon! Fifteen of these unhappy people were thus murdered in cold blood, when the remainder, to escape the same fate, embraced the only alternative—the religion of the Korán! And who has not mourned over the fate of those sons of Israel whose blood has still more recently stained the streets of Damascus? Is this the people of whom God hath said, “He that toucheth you, touches the apple of mine eye?” O when wilt thou arise and have mercy upon Zion! When will the blood-bought Church of Christ awake to compassion for thy woes? “Who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask of thy peace?”

The present is an interesting moment for the Jews, and it may prove an important crisis in their history. With “a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind,” they have looked for the long-promised Messiah, till “all faces are turned into paleness.” As a cordial to their fainting spirits, they have been assured, by calculations made by their learned rabbis, that their expected deliverer would make his appearance within a certain definite period, or during a particular year. That period (1840) has now expired, but it has brought them no deliverance! And where is Messiah their king? Many of the Jews in Poland, as we learn by a letter from the Rev. Mr. Brown, of St. Pétersburgh, have openly avowed, that if he did not make his appearance before the end of this year, they were shut up to the conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. The day that I left Constantinople, a learned Jew called upon the Rev. Mr. Goodell, and told him that there were then forty Jews in that city who were accustomed to meet for religious worship on the



first day of the week, having come to the deliberate conclusion that they could look no longer for a Messiah to come after the end of the present year (ending October, 1840), but must believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Saviour. On my way to Smyrna, one of my fellow-passengers in the steamer was an intelligent Christian Jew, who informed me that in that city there was the same general state of feeling regarding the Messiah, and that numbers were entertaining a secret belief in Christ as the Saviour, and that some fifteen heads of families were instructing their children in the same belief. In Persia, the belief that Christ was to come in the year 1840 has been entertained for a considerable time, and I understand the same is true of the Jews throughout the East. This hope is now torn away, and the effect will be either to harden them in infidelity, or awaken serious and anxious inquiry on the subject of Christianity.

How many of them shall become the followers of Jesus, and give us their efficient aid in diffusing the blessings of the Gospel through the world, and how many wrap themselves in the icy folds of a heartless skepticism, and sink into the slumbers of the second death, will depend, under God, very much upon the stand which Christians take in this momentous crisis. Ye disciples of Jesus, how solemn is your responsibility at this time! For eighteen centuries, God, in the sovereign dispensations of his grace, has shut them up in unbelief, "till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in;" and ye "have now obtained mercy through their unbelief," "that *through your mercy* they also may obtain mercy." Let your compassion reach their case, and let your prayers ascend to Israel's God on their behalf. "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." For Zion's sake, hold not your peace until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; and as you breathe forth your importunate applications to Jehovah of hosts, forget not the unconverted remnant of the lost tribes of Israel.

"The position of the Jews, and the increasing expectation,

attention, and efforts of the Church in regard to them," says Mr. Cheever, "are significant. We think we may see indications of the meeting of those two tides of glory spoken of by Paul, which are together to roll over the world. The lines of prophecy in relation to Jew and Gentile run parallel; we should not expect to see the fulfilment of the one unless the attention of the world were turned upon the other; in proportion as the preparations of Divine providence for the one are accomplishing, the arrangements for the other will be completed in their train. If the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles is to be the period for the conversion of the Jews, the calling again of the Jews is also to be as life from the dead to the unconverted Gentiles. Here is a definite point. When it begins to appear, we may know that these things are nigh, even at the doors. Looking now across these vast and troubled waters, we think we see that circular central commotion, which indicates the actual meeting of those two main currents," and together will they roll on, till "*the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*"

THE END.

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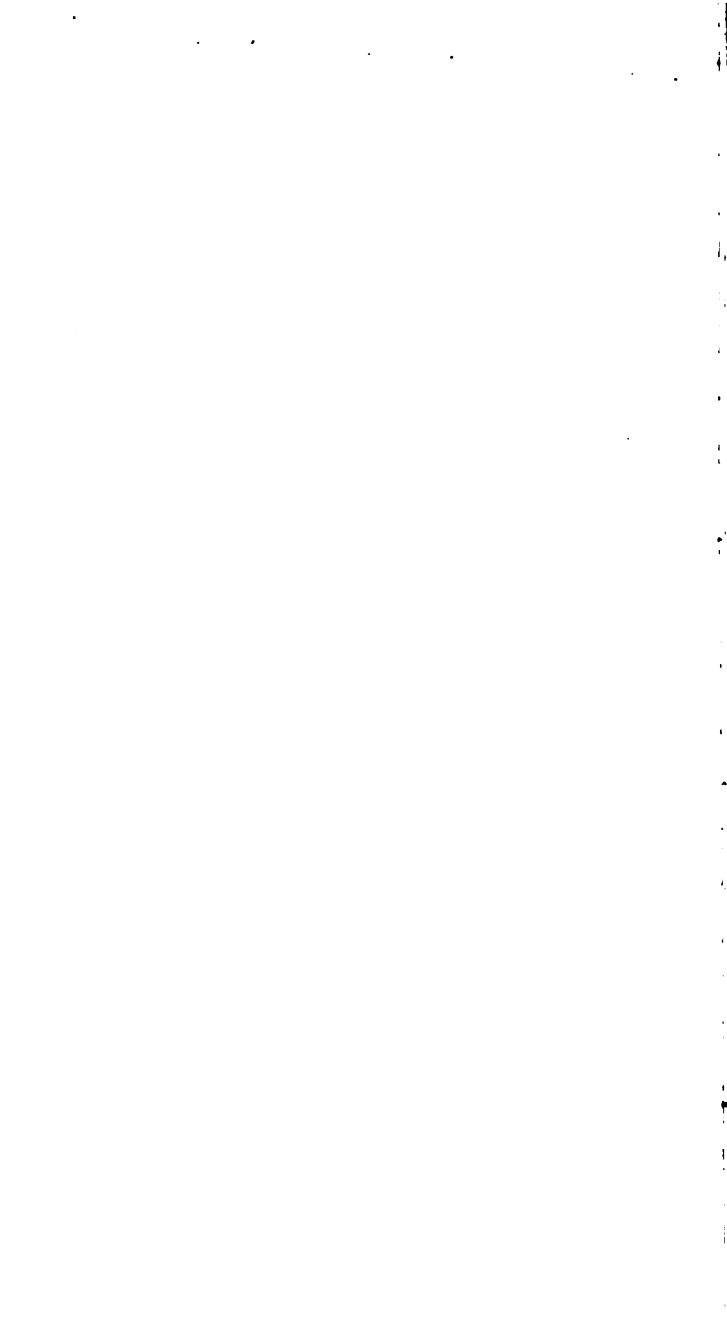
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